

درین



# METHUEN

Methuen & Co Ltd  
11 New Fetter Lane  
London EC4P 4BE

Methuen Inc  
733 Third Avenue  
New York NY 10017

New Accents

## Metafiction

The theory and practice of self-conscious fiction

PATRICIA WAUGH

*Metafiction* surveys the state of contemporary fiction in Britain and America and explores the political, social and economic factors which affect critical judgement. Patricia Waugh demonstrates how, in laying bare their own processes of artificial construction, 'self-conscious' texts suggest the ways in which our sense of reality is itself fabricated. The book draws on material from sociology, philosophy and linguistics as well as contemporary literary theory, and suggests the lines along which fiction might develop in future.

192 pages  
Hardback 0 416 32630 7 £8.95  
Paperback 0 416 32640 4 £3.95

Ideas

## The Man of Reason

'Male' and 'female' in western philosophy

GENEVIEVE LLOYD

This brief study is concerned with the inter-relationships between character ideals associated with Reason and our understanding of maleness and femaleness. Genevieve Lloyd argues that there is a male bias in the philosophical tradition that goes deeper than mere beliefs about supposed flaws in female character: ideals of rationality have incorporated exclusions of the feminine, and femininity has been partly constituted through such exclusions. By tracing these processes of exclusion from Plato to the present day, she brings the history of philosophy to bear on conceptual complexities of the current debate about gender.

160 pages 1ix USA  
Hardback 0 416 34910 2 £7.50  
Paperback 0 416 34920 X £3.95

University Paperback

## Jameson, Althusser, Marx

An introduction to *The Political Unconscious*

WILLIAM C. DOWLING

Professor Dowling gives a valuable overview of the current scene in contemporary theory viewed from a Marxist perspective. Fredric Jameson is probably the most influential Marxist critic writing today and his recent work, *The Political Unconscious*, has had an enormous impact on literary and cultural studies. Here William Dowling elucidates the unspoken assumptions at the foundation of Jameson's thought and shows how he attempts to subsume the theories of structuralism and poststructuralism in an expanded Marxism. More than an introduction to Jameson, this is a valuable book in its own right.

152 pages 1ix USA  
Paperback 0 416 38410 2 £4.95

## Contemporary Writers

### Patrick White

JOHN COLMBR

96 pages  
Paperback 0 416 36790 9 £2.25

### Malcolm Lowry

RONALD BINNS

96 pages  
Paperback 0 416 37750 6 £2.25

### Iris Murdoch

RICHARD TODD

112 pages  
Paperback 0 416 35420 3 £2.25

## The Times Literary Supplement

October 12 1984

Priority House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

## Contents

ART 1155-6, BIOGRAPHY 1153, CLASSICAL STUDIES 1142-4, ECONOMICS 1154, ENGLISH HISTORY 1152, ENGLISH LITERATURE 1170, FICTION 1166-8, LATIN AMERICA 1151, LITERARY CRITICISM 1149, MODERN HISTORY 1162-4, MUSIC 1157, NIGERIA 1150, POETRY 1169, POLITICS 1165

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO  
WILLIAM ST CLAIR

EDWARD W. SAID

ROLAND OLIVER

MARTIN LYNN

ALAN ANGELL

VALERIE PEARL

ROSALIE MANDER

A. W. B. SIMPSON

E. S. TURNER

MALCOLM CHAPMAN

GEORGE MIKES

DAVID ROSAND

WINTON DEAN

JOHN STEANE

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

BRIAN MORTON

MICHELE FIELD

A. S. BYATT

STANLEY WELLS

JOHN DEATHRIDGE

PETER KEMP

ZARA STEINER

JOHN KEEGAN

BRIAN BOND

BEN PIMLOTT

DONALD MACINTYRE

T. O. TREADWELL

JOHN BUTT

JOHN ROSSELLI

PETER KEMP

ALAN FRANKS

PETER LEWIS

CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE

LINDA TAYLOR

GEORGE CRAIG

MICHAEL HULSE

GREVEL LINDOP

EMMA LETLEY

TERRY EAGLETON

ROSEMARY ASHTON

Ronald Syme: *Roman Papers III. Historia Augusta Papers* 1142-4  
David Constantine: *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* 1148

Benita Parry: *Conrad and Imperialism - Ideological boundaries and visionary frontiers*  
Cedric Watts: *The Deceptive Text - An introduction to cover plots* 1149

Chinua Achebe: *The Trouble with Nigeria* 1150  
J. D. Y. Peel: *Ijesha and Nigerians - The incorporation of a Yoruba kingdom 1890s-1970s* 1150

Philip Berryman: *The Religious Roots of Rebellion - Christians in Central American revolutions*  
Kenneth N. Medhurst: *The Church and Labour in Colombia* 1151

Joyce Youings: *Sixteenth-Century England* 1151  
M. W. Greenslade (Editor): *A History of the County of Stafford - Volume XX* 1152

David Leigh: *High Time - The shocking life and times of Howard Marks* 1153

J. F. Federspiel: *The Ballad of Typhoid Mary* 1153  
Paul Jorion: *Les Pêcheurs d'Houat - Anthropologie économique* 1154

Andras Mezsei: *Magyar Kocka* 1154  
William C. Seitz: *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*

Serge Guilbaut: *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art - Abstract expressionism, freedom, and the Cold War* 1155-6

Curtis A. Price: *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* 1157  
Andrew Farkas (Editor): *Tina Tuffo - An anthology* 1157

The periodicals, 24: *London Magazine* 1158  
Museum books 1158

Letters on 'Islam in the World', 'H. G. Wells: Aspects of a Life', 'Ras and Lesbianism', etc 1159

Commentary  
The *Bostonians* (Curzon Cinema) 1160

Playing *Shakespeare* (Channel Four)  
John Barton: *Playing Shakespeare* 1160

Author, Author 1160  
Richard Wagner: *Tannhäuser* (Royal Opera House) 1161

*Greene at 80* (Radio 4)  
Doctor Fischer of Geneva (BBC2) 1161

Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (Editors): *The Missing Dimension - Governments and Intelligence communities in the twentieth century*

Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne: *The Dictionary of Espionage* 1162-3

F. H. Hinsley, E. E. Thomas, C. F. G. Ransom and R. C. Knight: *British Intelligence in the Second World War - Volume 1, Part 1* 1163-4

Charles Messenger: *Bomber Harris and the Strategic Bombing Offensive, 1939-1945* 1164

Robert Harris: *The Making of Neil Kinnock*  
G. M. F. Drower: *Neil Kinnock - The path to leadership* 1165

Andrew Taylor: *The Politics of the Yorkshire Miners* 1165  
Tom Sharpe: *Wilton High* 1166

Guillermo Cabrera Infante: *Infante's Inferno* 1166  
George MacBeth: *The Lion of Pescara* 1166

Christopher Priest: *The Glamour* 1167  
Howard Jacobson: *Peeping Tom* 1167

John Hale: *The Whistler Blower* 1167  
Barbara Trappido: *Noah's Ark* 1168

Christine Brooke-Rose: *Amalgamemnon* 1168  
Lando: *White: For Captain Steadman*

John Greening: *Westeners*  
Carl Rakosi: *Spiritus, I*

Paul Evans: *Sweet Lucy*  
Richard Burns: *Roots/Routes* 1169

Kenneth Curry: *The Contributions of Robert Southey to the Morning Post* 1170

Mary Ellen Brown: *Burris and Tradition* 1170  
Rita Goldberg: *Sex and Enlightenment - Women in Richardson and Diderot* 1170

Geoffrey Thayer: *The Romantic Predicament*  
Tobin Siebers: *The Romantic Fantastic* 1170

Paperbacks 1171  
Index of books reviewed 1171

Among this week's contributors 1172  
Fifty years on 1172

Cover picture

Samuel Palmer's 'Evening: A church among trees', (brown wash and point of brush on card, c. 1830) is on show until December 16 at the Fitzwilliam Museum in the exhibition *Samuel Palmer and The Ancients*: the catalogue by Raymond Lister is published by Cambridge University Press (99pp, with 149 black-and-white plates, £25; paperback £8.95, 0 521 26126 0).

## Biographers and historians

### Arnaldo Momigliano

RONALD SYME  
*Roman Papers III*  
pp 863-1558. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £40.  
0 19814399

*Historia Augusta Papers*  
Edited by A. R. Birley  
238pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £17.50.  
0 19814343

It is superfluous to say that the third volume of Sir Ronald Syme's *Roman Papers* (including papers published during 1971-81) and the *Historia Augusta Papers* are treasure-houses for anyone who cares about the ancient Romans. To indicate the variety of the arguments they contain it will be enough to quote the titles of three consecutive chapters of the *Roman Papers*: 'Sallust's wife', 'Mendacity in Velleius', 'Donatus and the like', the last being an investigation of African nomenclature which incidentally includes curious remarks about the forgery of inscriptions in Umbria. A. R. Birley has added to *Roman Papers III* an index of Ancient Personal Names for all three volumes of the *Roman Papers*: this is an inestimable tool for research.

The relation between biography and history is the central interest of Syme's lifelong study of Roman history - or, rather, of history altogether. Unlike other prosopographers, who are mainly concerned with collecting biographical data for social history, he has always emphasized the historiographical problems posed by the co-existence of history and biography. Hence his various works on Tacitus, Sallust and the *Historia Augusta*. In *Roman Papers III* two essays are specifically devoted to Plutarch and Suetonius ('Biographers of the Caesars', 'The Travels of Suetonius Tranquillus'), while a third makes explicit his favourite dilemma even in its title: 'History or Biography, the case of Tiberius Caesar'. The papers on Plutarch and Suetonius try to establish more precise dates for the careers of the two writers and consequently for the composition of their biographies of Roman emperors. The results may not command general assent, but these essays as a whole show how conscious the two ancient biographers were of their problematic relations with the historians. I therefore take them as my point of departure for some further considerations on the same topic. Holding the same interest in the relations be-

tween history and biography as he does, I still feel that Sir Ronald's interpretation of the *Historia Augusta* (a work which purports to be a fourth-century imitation of Suetonius' *Caesars*) leaves something unaccounted for.

We are still struggling to sort out the implications of a distinction which the Greeks introduced into their accounts of the past by separating history from biography. If history takes care of collective events, such as wars and revolutions, whereas biography tries to give unity and sense to what an individual does or suffers from birth to death, this is the Greek heritage, not a law of nature. To those who, like myself, find this distinction both useful and troublesome the only consolation I have to offer is that it troubled its Greek inventors and their direct Roman disciples. Biographies of kings and of political leaders are of course the most obviously unsatisfactory. Xenophon already tried hard to separate the life of King Agesilaos from the part he played in the Greek history of his time. Xenophon's younger contemporary, Theopompus, did his best to make his Philippic history look different from a biography of King Philip of Macedon. As long as there were enough kings and politicians about to set against each other, it was perhaps not too arduous to separate the study of each of them from the study of the conflicts in which they were collectively involved. The story of the struggle between Demosthenes against Philip was recognizably different from the biography either of Demosthenes or of Philip.

But by the time Rome seemed to have become a world state, and one emperor seemed to control that state, keeping the distinction between history and biography proved to be more arduous. True enough, there were the Parthians, and their kings, outside the Empire; and there were of course plenty of other 'barbarian' leaders to annoy the Romans. But somehow Parthian kings and their generals (unlike Achaemenid kings and generals) and German leaders, even Arminius, were not considered appropriate subjects for a biography. At the beginning of the second century AD any attempt to separate Roman history from the biography of the individual Roman emperors might well have seemed hopeless. Plutarch produced a series of biographies of Roman emperors from Augustus to Vitellius outside his series of parallel biographies. In the life of Galba - one of two surviving in this series - he explicitly refers to his problem of maintaining the distance from 'pragmatic' history. But to judge from these two samples he was not very

successful: he gives little more than a chronicle of the political events for which the individual emperor was responsible.

It was Suetonius, rather than Plutarch, who saved imperial biography from confusion with imperial history. A younger contemporary of Plutarch, and a friend of the Younger Pliny, who was a friend of Tacitus, Suetonius was undoubtedly acquainted with the *Historiae* (and perhaps with the *Annales*) of Tacitus when he embarked on the composition of his *Twelve Caesars*. He gave his biographies a shape which makes it clear to modern as well as to ancient and medieval readers that he was writing biography and not history. How he succeeded is less easy to explain, chiefly because he seems to have subtly modified his scheme after writing about Caesar and Augustus. In these two biographies (the first of which can be usefully compared with the life of Caesar in Plutarch's series of parallel lives) he emphasizes the distinction between the public and the private life of his two heroes. In the lives of later emperors - notably those of Tiberius, Gaius, Nero and Domitian - the emphasis is on the contrast between the respectable and the less respectable aspects (or stages) of their lives. In the biographies of Claudius, Vespasian and Titus the black-and-white technique is replaced by a gradation of colours which makes these lives the best, if I am not mistaken. In any case Suetonius created a type of biography which was suitable for the characterization of isolated sovereigns and kept it recognizably distinct from royal chronicles and histories. Before becoming a model for medieval and modern biographers Suetonius was a model to later Roman biographers of emperors.

The *Historia Augusta*, which professes to be written by six authors under the emperors Diocletian and Constantine, is obviously and explicitly modelled on Suetonius. In the life of Probus its writer (allegedly Flavius Vopiscus of Syracuse) accepts the distinction between biography and history and includes Suetonius' *Tranquillus* among the biographers who have written 'not so much with eloquence as with truthfulness'. In the lives of Maximus and Balbinus (allegedly written by Julius Capitolinus) Suetonius is one of the model biographers. But the Suetonian model could function only on two conditions. First, the writer had to obtain sufficient details about the personal circumstances and character of an emperor to fill the Suetonian scheme. Suetonius himself had used previous biographies, letters, and anecdotal traditions (transmitted either orally or in writ-

ing). An imperial secretary, though perhaps dismissed by Hadrian before he finished his *Twelve Caesars*, Suetonius had been in an ideal position to gather such evidence: part of it belonged in any case to living memory. Second, the writer had to assume an attitude towards imperial power which was singularly devoid of sophistication. A good emperor was to Suetonius just a good man, that is, a victorious general, a competent administrator and a fair judge. No institutional or religious justification was required, though individual emperors could claim divine signs in their favour. It never occurred to Suetonius to explain why and how a man like Vespasian became an emperor and was succeeded by his two sons as emperors - except in the elementary sense that the military career offered what we might call the natural avenue to supreme power.

The *Historia Augusta* had difficulties in following the Suetonian model on both counts. While it used some reliable and fairly abundant sources for the main biographies of the second and early third centuries (roughly from Hadrian to Caracalla), it was unable or unwilling to find adequate facts for the minor biographies of this period (an aspect to which I shall return) and for the biographies from Geta to Carus, Carinus and Numerianus. After Caracalla there is an increasing amount of sheer invention, which includes not only facts, but sources for alleged facts. Not surprisingly, this is also the section of the *Historia* in which ideological statements or episodes are more explicit and plentiful, of a type unknown to Suetonius. But the Suetonian scheme is disrupted even more by the preoccupation with pretenders, rebels and junior partners in power which inspires the so-called secondary lives. Indeed in the lives of Firmus, Saturninus, Proculus and Bonosus the writer self-consciously dissociates himself from Suetonius (and from Marus Maximus) by his interest in 'petty tyrants'. The secondary lives ultimately introduce a historical appreciation which transcends the figures of the individual emperors and involves provincial and sectional situations, not to speak of borderline chiefs, such as Queen Zenobia. The combined effect of all these minor lives, with their excursions and asides (for instance on Gaul and Egypt in Firmus 7-8), is to break the biographical scheme and to tend towards general history. No wonder that one of the last lives, that of Carus, begins with an excursus about Roman history in general. What is perhaps even more characteristic is that *Historia*

### Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality

JOHN MAYNARD

Pioneering work, showing how Charlotte Brontë's early stories and novels deal openly with an underworld of consuming passion, adultery, seduction, promiscuity, frigidity, and incest. The author traces the ways in which these themes are incorporated and developed in her mature work, notably *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, both of which offer an intensely felt but freely realised vision of sexual awakening. £19.50 net

Now in paperback

### Critical Assumptions

K. K. RUTHVEN

An historical survey of some important theories of literary criticism... an extraordinary assemblage of quotations from a huge number of sources (mainly classical and English), linked by lucid, cogent and often provocative and witty prose. Noises and Quivers Paperback £7.95 net

### Poetry and Fable

Studies in Mythological Narrative in Sixteenth-Century France

ANN MOSS

A major study of the development of French poetry in the Renaissance, which examines changes in style and vision by looking at how poetry was read in this period and how it was written. The author focuses in particular on the vernacular versions of fables from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and on mythological narratives in the Ovidian tradition composed by Lamoral de Belges, François Habert, Balf, and Fordard. £22.50 net

Cambridge Studies in French

### Plays by Dion Boucicault

Edited by PETER THOMSON

Collected together for the first time, five plays by Dion Boucicault, the most popular dramatist of the second half of the nineteenth century. Two plays are published here for the first time this century, *Used Up* and *Jessie Brown*. *The Shapraun* and *The Octoroon* are outstanding examples of melodrama; *Old Heads and Young Hearts* is one of the few notable nineteenth-century comedies. Hard covers £24.00 net Paperback £8.95 net

British and American Playwrights 1750-1920

### Verdi's 'Macbeth'

A Sourcebook

DAVID ROSEN and ANDREW PORTER

A unique collection of papers given at the Fifth International Verdi Congress in 1977, where the 1847 version of *Macbeth* was performed. Focusing on the myriad ways Verdi fused rhetoric, music and staging into a powerful theatrical experience, the volume also includes much contemporary documentation about the opera. £30.00 net

### The Language and Logic of the Bible

The Earlier Middle Ages

G. R. EVANS

An examination of the assumptions on the basis of which medieval students of the Bible in the West approached their reading. The period covered is from Augustine to the end of the twelfth century when new skills in grammar and logic made it possible to develop more refined critical methods. £18.00 net

### Metaphysics

D. W. HAMLIN

An introduction to metaphysics, concentrating on central metaphysical concepts and problems, including the principles of ontology, substance, particulars and universals, monism and pluralism, space and time, minds, selves and personal identity. Hard covers £20.00 net Paperback £8.95 net

### Metaphysics: Its Structure and Function

STEPHAN KÖRNER

An ambitious and substantial study of metaphysics, its nature and inescapability, which describes how the categorical framework of a person's metaphysical beliefs may be embedded in more ordinary beliefs and practical attitudes to the world. £22.50 net

Now in paperback

### Anglo-Saxon Architecture, Volume III

H. M. TAYLOR

'Unquestionably this is a masterpiece of scholarship, an immense contribution to its subject. Enduring it surely must be, not only as a sourcebook, but equally as an inspiring model of vision and integrity of research. Antiquity

Paperback £12.95 net

# CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS



## THE NAME OF THE ROSE

### Umberto Eco

Written by a professor of semiotics, an intriguing international bestseller, set in a Franciscan abbey in the 14th Century Italy 1327. Inside a powerful Benedictine monastery, one after the other half a dozen monks are found murdered in the most bizarre ways. A learned Franciscan attempts to solve the mystery and finds himself caught in a series of frightening events.

'Whether you're into Sherlock Holmes, Montaliou, Borges, the nouvelle critique, the Rule of St Benedict, metaphysics, library design or *The Thing from the Crypt*, you'll love it. Who can that leave out?

*The Sunday Times*  
Paperback £2.95

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE IMAGINATION

### Forty Essays by Guy Davenport

An erudite and enlightening collection of fact and substance examining opinions which are firmly described and supported. Each essay is a tour of the history of ideas and imagination in art, philosophy and literature with the author making unexpected and exciting connections. 'One of our most gifted and versatile men of letters'

*New York Times*

'You should get this book and read it, get seduced by it, even obsessed by it. It reminds you of how much there is we need to know... how startlingly related all human experience and art really are'

*Washington Book Review*

First British Publication

## ECLOGUES

### Eight stories by Guy Davenport

Each of these extraordinary stories is a historical and linguistic collage, a mixture of myth and fable, the inspiration coming from Plutarch, Montaigne, the Acts of the Apostles or the daily newspaper.

'Guy Davenport is among the very few truly original, truly autonomous voices now audible in American letters... Seemingly short sentences and fragmentary phrases open, via unexpected commas, into sentences as opulent as Japanese paper blossoms dropped in clear water. His gait has the spare, funny lyricism of the music of Eric Satie'

*The New Yorker*

'Davenport's conception of the short-story form is remarkable. The result is a tour de force that adds something new to the art of fiction'

*The New York Times*

First British Publication

Paperback £2.95

## PICADOR

OUTSTANDING  
INTERNATIONAL  
WRITING

*Augusta*, while asserting the distinction between biography and history, can produce passages in which Livy and Sallust are treated as biographers (notably *Firmus* 6).

The *Historia* itself gives ample warning about its own lack of scruples in the matter of accuracy. One of the most ideologically committed biographies, that of Aurelian, is preceded by a jocular discussion about the lies of the historians. Though in another passage (*Probus* 2) we are encouraged to believe that Livy, Sallust, Tacitus and Trogus are less reliable than biographers like Marius Maximus, Suetonius and some of the writers of the *Historia Augusta* themselves, who are quoted by name, it is difficult to believe that this is not part of the joke. Displays of mock erudition just for the fun of it had been known for centuries before the *Historia Augusta* was composed. The difficulty in this particular case is to reconcile what is obviously serious with what is flagrantly frivolous and impertinent. For me, at least, it is already difficult enough to understand why the *Historia Augusta* becomes increasingly unreliable for the third century.

But the real mystery is the relation between the invention of facts and ideological trends of the *Historia Augusta*. There is normally no difficulty in establishing the relation between the two elements where the ideological bias is conspicuous and the factual inaccuracy patent. St Jerome himself recognized that his propaganda for monastic ideals in his utterly unreliable life of Paulus had led some readers to believe that Paulus had never existed (*Vita Hilarionis* 1). St Jerome's lack of scruples as a biographer of saints (not elsewhere) is therefore no problem — so straight is his purpose. But the purpose of the *Historia Augusta* is, at least to me, not so evident. There are ideological trends, but none is all-pervasive, none characterizes the work as a whole. The most obvious, because more diffuse and culminating in the lives of Claudius, Tacitus and Probus, is the emphasis on the rights and dignity of the emperor. In the life of Probus this is combined with a sudden utopian pacifism which contradicts, for instance, the admiration for the military qualities of Claudius (and, with certain reservations, of Aurelian).

The religious attitude of the *Historia Augusta* is notoriously difficult to define: here, the chapter, "Tolerance and Bigotry" in *Roman Papers III* is required reading. The life of Severus Alexander can be understood as an ideal presentation of an emperor ready to build a temple to Christ and to give him a place among the gods; his private sanctuary included Christ, Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana and Orpheus. But Aurelian reproaches the Senators for behaving like a Christian gathering in their hesitation to open the Sibylline books (ch 20). The author makes it clear that at least in this he sympathizes with Aurelian: the pagan hero, Apollonius of Tyana, is conspicuously on Aurelian's side. The attitude is here mildly anti-Christian. In other passages there is neutral curiosity or amused irony about Jews and Christians. How much the writer knew of either is left in doubt in almost every case. One wonders how that Celtic virago, wife of Proculus, came to be nicknamed Samsa and who was the astrologer (precisely an astrologer) who attributed to Moses a life-span of 125 (not 120) years (*Claud.* 2, 4).

In the *Historia Augusta Papers*, as in the three preceding volumes on the same subject, Syme has a simple answer to these problems about the ideological trends of the *Historia*. 'The author [of the HA] is not a historian, but a cheerful impostor, delighting in the parody of erudition and the parade of variants'. To those who feel uneasy about such simplicity Syme opposes the experience of his own long acquaintance with the world of professors: 'a common frailty of the academic mind demands that a piece of writing should have a serious purpose' (p 125). In this attitude he is confirmed by the authority of Hermann Dessau, whose theory on the *Historia Augusta* he accepts: it is not the product of six authors, working more or less in the knowledge of each other, during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine; it is the work of one forger writing about AD 390-395. One must immediately add that the case for the one author and the later date has been remarkably strengthened in the twenty years since Syme began to write about



Gallo-Roman bas-relief from Langres, northern France, of a four-wheeled wine-wagon conveying a capacious barrel on a heavy chassis drawn by a pair of powerful oxen: reproduced from K. D. White's *Greek and Roman Technology* (272pp, with 177 black-and-white illustrations. Thames and Hudson, £18.50, 0 500 4004 X).

what was destined to become his favourite subject. Computers have confirmed the impression of the uniformity of style of the alleged six authors. A. Chastagnol has reinforced what remains the most important single argument in favour of the later date: he has shown that the use which the *Historia Augusta* makes of Aurelius Victor (who wrote in 360) goes far beyond the passage in the life of Septimius Severus already noticed by Dessau — which in itself could be taken as a later addition. Furthermore, Syme can point to the analogy of forgeries discovered in recent times, such as those perpetrated by Sir Edmund Backhouse, the Hermit of Peking.

All this is very important and very good. But a date can be assigned to a text of uncertain origin only if one understands its historical background and by implication its purpose. In full awareness of being one of those Italian scholars whose "national fancies in classical learning and national contrasts" afford Syme some amusement (p 212). I must go on reasserting that for me the *Historia Augusta* remains the "unsolved problem of historical forgery" about which I wrote in 1954 in the light of what I knew at that time. First of all, we need a better explanation than that given by Syme for the difference between the well-informed and ideologically relatively neutral first part and the fictional, but ideologically overcharged, second part. Syme contents himself

## An imaginary Greece

William St Clair

DAVID CONSTANTINE  
Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal  
241pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.  
0 521 25342 X

It was a long time before anyone from Northern Europe decided to see what remained of ancient civilization in Greece. Italy, with its galleries of antiquities, was for centuries essentially a museum for artists, scholars and noblemen on the Grand Tour, but only a handful of explorers ventured beyond the Ionian Sea.

A journey to Greece was expensive and dangerous. Maps were inaccurate and the standard guidebook was still Pausanias, who wrote about 150 AD. Malaria was endemic. Plagues swept the country nearly every year, and the Ottoman authorities provided only intermittent protection against bandits. It was not surprising therefore that Greece remained unvisited, and that those few travellers who went there, although they poached information freely from their predecessors, regarded themselves as members of an exclusive circle.

In his excellent study, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal*, David Constantine traces the course of Europe's discovery of Greece in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Building on the work of the late Terence Spencer in *Rare Greece, Sad Relics* (1954), he not only captures the pioneering excitement but makes an interesting contribution to the history of ideas. It was a delightful surprise to find that Greece still contained many impressive monuments surviving from ancient times. Spots and Wheeler were each able to make a 'childish sketch of the Parthenon still virtually intact before it was blown up by a Venetian bomb in 1687'. Homer took on a new immediacy when read by the shores of the Scaevander,

with the statement: "so portentous an evolution in the course of one and the same work is rare and remarkable phenomenon. Yet such are the facts" (pp 215-16).

But even if we get the right explanation of this point, the confused mental world of the *Historia Augusta* will still need interpretation as a whole. The best attempt so far known to me is the one offered by Elias Bickerman in a paper, "Faux littéraires dans l'Antiquité Classique", (*Riv. Fil. Class.* 101, 1973, 22-41), which seems to be unduly neglected. Bickerman reminds us that if somebody wanted to make telling the religious events of the reign of Diocletian and Constantine he had to present himself as their contemporary (Suetonius, the contemporary of Trajan and Hadrian, but stopped with Domitian). Bickerman also reminds us that both Orpheus and Apollonius Tyana were taken by some circles of Late Antiquity to be the companions, rather than opponents, of a human, basically un-Christian Jesus. However, I am not certain that I understand the ultimate implications of these comments for the question of the *Historia Augusta*. Sir Ronald Syme no doubt knows as much as I do. He approves of Bickerman's quotation from Augustine: "Mendax vero amat mentiri apud habitum animo in delectatione mentis" (*Conf. XI, 18, P.L. XL, 501*). But it is enough, in general — and for the *Historia Augusta* in particular?

at one of his seven birth-places, or by his ties on loss. Some travellers were certain that they had discovered traditions among the people with a continuous history right back to ancient times. Others, more convincingly, were fascinated by the realization that at least the past and the landscape were unaltered, and Greek history had to be read with new eyes.

But Greece also has the power to disappoint. Weighed down by preconceptions about what to expect, Europeans have seldom been able to see Greece except in literary terms, and the real Greece has rarely matched their exaggerated expectations. There have always been poets and scholars who, knowing this, have defied the odds and stayed away, and even, like Humboldt, resented careful history and scientific archaeology as destructive of the classical spirit. The central figure of the book is Winckelmann who, despite many proffered opponents, refused to visit Greece but in his enthusiasm for ancient art remained capable of indulging homoerotic fantasies at the expense of a battered Greco-Roman portrait bust. If actual journeys were performed mainly by those who supplied the imaginative framework.

Constantine's approach is chronologically but severely selective. He examines in detail the writers who best illustrate his theories and largely ignores the others. Particularly regrettable is the absence of William Lithgow and what Constantine had paid more attention to the views of the European merchant class. Constantine and Smyrni who always regarded themselves as the real experts on Greece. But he has succeeded admirably in illustrating the creative tension between the scrupulous and scholarly himself, he is not immune to the romance of Greece and his book is a worthy and delightful celebration of the Hellenic Ideal in its many guises.

## Seeing through the story

Edward W. Said

BENITA PARRY  
Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological boundaries and visionary frontiers  
162pp. Macmillan. £20.  
0 333 27083 5  
CEDRIC WATTS  
The Deceptive Text: An introduction to covert plots  
203pp. Brighton: Harvester. £20.  
0 7108 0608 6

Benita Parry's *Conrad and Imperialism* is the first and only contemporary book to deal with what, from almost every point of view, is the most important aspect of Conrad's writing. Conrad's politics have been variously studied, of course, although there has been a tendency to arrange his extraordinarily discordant and antithetical views into reassuringly harmonious syntheses. His metaphysical students, however, have laid bare Conrad's deeply nihilistic attitudes, and without palliative or sweeteners shown what an uncompromisingly dark mind he had. The works of J. Hillis Miller and Roy Roussel in particular pioneered that avenue of approach without systematically linking it to Conrad's simultaneously reactionary and anarchist notions. With the exception of Zdzislaw Najder, his biographers and "life-and-times" critics have seen in Conrad's disturbingly disjunctive work either a reductive catch-all or two (various neuroses, for example) or numerous ideas available to any late nineteenth-century mind. Najder's virtue is to have stripped away Conrad's protective covering in order to expose the man's bewilderingly diverse make-up. Yet the fact that Conrad's entire adult life — as sailor and as British writer — was lived in with the culture and the minute daily practice of imperialism, has gone without proper analysis until Ms Parry's interesting and suggestive work.

Her book is built around a dense and intelligent analysis of five works: *Heart of Darkness*, *The Rescue*, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*. She maintains that Conrad's writing is saturated with the colonial premises of his epoch, but that his texts "struggle to escape ideology", if "literature is approached [the way she does] as an autonomous practice producing specifically fictional representations of what has through other means been construed as history". Thus she attempts no historical investigation of imperialism on the one hand, or of what imperialism might theoretically dictate to an artist on the other. She is certainly right to say that as a term imperialism is marked by a great deal of confusion and fluctuation in meaning, a disability in implementing her project that she turns to advantage by noting how it was that Conrad did not see imperialism steadily but "whole, thereby inviting readers to scrutinize the ethical foundations to the civilisation of expansionist capitalism and engaging them in a critical view of imperialism's urge to conquer the earth".

Her findings are essentially that Conrad's notorious inconsistencies, paradoxes, mysteries reproduce — the word is mine, not hers — and elaborate the disjunctions of imperialism itself. His achievement as a man with double vision was to "engender a critique more destructive of imperialism's ideological premises than did the polemics of his contemporary opponents of empire". Thus Conrad's contrapuntal weaving together of notions he approved — solidarity, discipline, efficiency, service, idealism — with notions he distrusted and feared — expansion, greed, domination, arrogance, deceit — comprise the texture of his narratives, and Parry skillfully reveals how in one major work after another Conrad gives with one hand and takes away with the other. Everything, she says, is undercut by everything else: dreamers by adventurers, poets by slavers, missionaries by thieves, idealists by murderers. Nevertheless, in what Parry refers to as her "interlocutions" of Conrad's narrative structure "a vatic impulse" makes its appearance as an explanation for his look to the future, beyond ideology and beyond "the premises of [his period's] authorized version" of history, politics, race. Although she is too honest to suggest that Conrad did in fact have concrete ideas about a better, imperialism-free future... he didn't —

Parry valiantly strives to see in works like *Lord Jim* "illuminations of the human need to anticipate and possess the future, but without intimations of who the architects of the new age will be or what it is they are striving to construct".

In welcoming and praising Parry's fine book we should not, however, be blind to its quite striking weaknesses, weaknesses that have the signal virtue of lighting up the problems inherent in her subject. There are three kinds of problems. One is theoretical and epistemological. Parry inherits it so to speak, but she does not do much to mitigate its effects. Imperialism has been defined and studied almost exclusively as a social, political or economic formation. It has almost never been looked at as a cultural phenomenon except, Parry quite rightly intimates, when authors like Kipling are examined crudely for their jingoistic attitudes. There has been hardly any work on what role culture plays in sustaining imperialism or, for that matter, in initiating it. Conrad's fiction repeatedly invites attention to the idea of domination and exported authority, and most of the time — *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo* quickly come to mind — seems to be saying that cultural, psychological and philosophical motives inaugurate overseas adventure and keep it going. Critics who write in England or America have some difficulty in talking wholesale about an imperialistic culture (a notion of great use to Third World writers), but some such idea is behind Conrad's work, even though of course he happens also to have belonged to that culture.

As to how Conrad wrote about, or wrote, imperialism at a specific moment, in a specific culture, in a specific language, we do not as yet have the methodological instruments for such an inquiry. The trouble with Parry's book is that she lets an analysis of Conrad's ideas (not his language) stand in for the much larger task she understandably sidesteps. Nevertheless, and this is the second set of problems, she is scarcely concerned enough with language and structure. Surprisingly for someone as astringent as she, Parry is all too ready to be satisfied with a few phrases about art's redemptive value, and not at all inclined to consider how Conrad's narratives themselves, as well as his peculiar idiom and style, consolidated the power of the culture he also criticized. A more unforgiving analysis of Conrad would probably have focused on the sovereign attitudes of his narratives as, through vehicles like Marlow or the unnamed narrator of *Nostromo*, they reaffirm and valorize the very Europeans they impugn and criticize. It comes down to an extraordinarily severe, and perhaps even impoverishing question: can anyone escape imperialism, and is there any critic within imperialism's orbit capable of suggesting a way out of it without seeming to prop it up? Rather than allowing art the unquestioned privilege of "going beyond" ideology, we would need much closer attention than Parry displays, to the verbal, imaginative and ideological overlappings between narrative on the one hand and, on the other, ethnographic reports, travel accounts, political treatises and the like. Can literary language be thought radically to challenge the enchainments of so systematic and total a phenomenon as imperialism, or is there — as Chinua Achebe among others has believed — no difference in theory between Conrad and the coarsest racists of his time?

Lastly, we come to the problem of how, given the imprisonments and dominations of the imperialist moment, one liberates oneself from it. Parry seems to think that the critic opposed to imperialism, as she clearly is, can rise above it in part because a great artist's work affords one an opportunity to do so. I agree with her to some extent, but I am not nearly as sanguine about the result. Obviously the near absence of interest in Conrad's own imperialism after so many reams of criticism on every subject except that, speaks to what makes liberation difficult to achieve. Moreover, critical consciousness is a much more complex and changeable thing to achieve than Parry might think. Twentieth-century Marxism is strewn with the wreckage of such devices as Lukács's imputed consciousness, Ernst Bloch's utopian gesture, Sartre's dialectical reason, Gramsci's counter-hegemonic formations. The novelty about liberation from im-

perialism is, for the critic within an imperialist culture, that the process of liberation is going on, being lived elsewhere and, for the independent critic working in a former colony, it has taken alarmingly repressive and retrograde turns at home.

What I miss in Parry's work then is some sense of the complex situation in which analyses of the sort she so ably attempts are located. Who are they written for, for example, and what use are we to make of Conrad's blank "vatic impulse", especially given that the discrepancy between metropolis and peripheries since Conrad's death has increased and deepened, has been given a rhetorical stridency and resonance that envelop even the quietly patient work of a literary critic?

It may seem a little unfair to gauge how far Parry has gone in trying to get at the most difficult aspects of Conrad by comparing her book with Cedric Watts's *The Deceptive Text*. They belong to two entirely different worlds, although as one appreciatively reads them both it is discovered that Parry has left Watts's world very far behind. His claims are unexceptionable: many novels, but Conrad's in particular, contain hidden plots which when pointed out enrich our reading of the main narrative. Much of Watts's book is taken up with interesting ideas about and demonstrations of this central motif, although he does go on defensively about the value of his project for rather too long a time. The disconcerting thing about his work is that he seems a very cheerful critic, a man for whom the enjoyment and enrichment of friends and students are the main consideration in what he does. There is little in his criticism that seems problematical to him. Books are to be read and deciphered, novels are examined for subtexts which when we see them enhance understanding, authors are appreciated for various sorts of complexity. Thus, in somewhat too prissy a tone, we are assured that Conrad was not a racist, and that his

strange ideas notwithstanding, his novels are "meritorious".

Whereas Parry probes for what is often imponderable, tragic and dark. What is reassuring, eminently competent, mildly assertive. These are, in short, two completely different and opposed views of narrative text and critical consciousness, not so much only as they focus on Conrad, but as they divide the critical scene today. I wish I could say that they are equally valid. They are not, and it is because of how disorienting even the most superficial reading of Conrad is to one's routine views that we must admire Watts for having stood his rather narrow ground so obstinately. Ms Parry takes us a good deal further, however, even though she is not an abstruse critical theorist. She does now have an obligation to proceed with more reflection on the discourse of imperialism, a task which should engage many critics and for which Conrad's immensely impressive narrative achievements are uniquely suited.

The second international conference on Sir Walter Scott took place at Aberdeen University during August 1982 organized by J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt, who have collected the proceedings in *Scott and his Influence* (517pp. Association for Scottish Literary Studies, University of Aberdeen. £15. 0 9502629 3 5). Thomas Crawford, introducing the volume, believes that the rehabilitation of Scott is already underway, and in the first of the fifty essays, "Scott and the Really Great Tradition", Richard Waswo argues against Leavis's "Out of Scott a bad tradition came", and against the generally accepted view that although he may be broad, Scott is not deep. Waswo places Scott in the company of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Fielding, and concludes that "the really great tradition in fiction is all of it". Among the other essays are several accounts of Scott's influence on Canadian, American, Danish and Italian literatures.

## David Lodge

### SMALL WORLD

Shortlisted for the 1984 Booker Prize

"...as readable as ever, and as funny; so perfectly exact on personality and dialogue that one never muddles the enormous international cast. It is the biggest intellectual treat I've had for ages."

Isabel Quigly, *Financial Times*

"The result is a wonderful tissue of outrageous coincidences and correspondences, teasing elevations of suspense and delayed climaxes, all of them interlarded with tongue-in-cheek literary and literary-critical allusions... a very happy, lively, exhilarating, funny and ingenious display of innocently experienced high spirits."

Anthony Thwaite, *Observer*

"Academic infighting, couplings touching, funny and frightful, splendid set-pieces, dark humour, sharp wit and plain force — here is everything one expects from this author but thricefold and three times as entertaining as anything he has written before. Technically alone this is a staggering feat."

Janice Elliott, *Sunday Telegraph*

"I doubt if any author has packed so many first-class jokes into his pages since the palmy days of Wodehouse and Perelman."

Keith Brace, *Birmingham Post*

"It would be more than usually unfair to reveal any details of the ingenious and proliferate plotting. There is a new coincidence, a new disappointment, a new comic debacle over every page."

A. S. Byatt, *The Times*

"*Small World* is the best constructed, the most gripping and the funniest of his novels to date. There are few writers I look forward to reading as much as I do him, and this novel is hugely enjoyable."

Harriet Waugh, *Spectator*

"The most brilliant and also the funniest he has written."

Frank Kermode, *London Review of Books*

"...richly enjoyable — Lodge's novels should be placed in all good time-capsules."

Bob Marshall, *Bookseller*

"Dazzlingly funny... I enjoyed the complicated story immensely, especially for the sheer brilliance of its execution... Lodge is observant and witty and a very funny author indeed."

Paul Bailey, *Standard*

Secker & Warburg

£8.95



# Scenes of disorder

Roland Oliver

CHINUA ACHEBE  
The Trouble with Nigeria  
68pp. Heinemann. £1.95.  
0435906984

In preparation for the federal elections of December 1983, Nigeria's leading novelist Chinua Achebe addressed his countrymen in a political pamphlet, presumably in aid of the campaign of the People's Redemption Party of which he was the deputy national president. The elections were duly held, but failed to produce any change in the political leadership. They were followed in less than a month by a military coup, of which the leaders would seem to share a good many of Achebe's opinions. For the time being, however, they have also put an end both to political parties and to political discussion in Nigeria.

Such is Achebe's skill and grace as a writer of English that even this domestic piece d'occasion will command a world-wide circulation. It will be widely quoted, and not least for its frank speaking, which will be taken by many to apply to Black Africa as a whole. For example, Achebe assures his compatriots that

Nigeria is not a great country. It is one of the most disorderly nations in the world. It is one of the most corrupt, insensitive, inefficient places under the sun. It is one of the most expensive countries and one of those that give least value for money. It is dirty, callous, noisy, ostentatious, dishonest and vulgar.

To anyone who would ask, why, with these views, he still chooses to live there, he replies:

The answer is simple. Nigeria is where God in his infinite wisdom chose to plant me. Therefore I don't consider that I have any right to seek out a more comfortable corner of the world which someone else's intelligence and labour have tidied up. I know enough history to realise that civilisation does not fall down from the sky; it has always been the result of people's toil and sweat, the fruit of their long search for order and justice under brave and enlightened leaders.

Coming to grips with the argument, one's thoughts are drawn to the leaders. Achebe says: "It is not what they are only because their leaders are not what they should be." It may be sound electioneering technique to suggest that there is nothing wrong with the man in the street, and that all he needs to do is to choose a better lot of leaders. But as political thought it is scarcely satisfying. Like so many other attractively forthright assertions in this short book, it could in fact be written the other way round without any demonstrable loss of veracity: Nigerian leaders are what they are only because the Nigerian people have not yet learnt to insist on something better.

Take the issue of corruption, on which Achebe has much to say, but all of it suggesting a poison which has entered Nigeria through its Westernized élite and has spread downwards through society from there. He writes of

The countless billions that a generous Providence poured into our national coffers in the last ten years... stolen and sited away by people in power... squandered in uncontrolled importation of all kinds of useless merchandise... embroiled through inflated contracts to an increasing army of political loyalists... consumed in the escalating salaries of a grossly overstaffed and unproductive public service.

The suggested remedy is that the man at the top should rid himself of his corrupt followers, and all will be well.

But is this a correct analysis? The corruptions of the small man offer less scope for purple prose, but, for example, the last time I was in Nigeria I was told on good authority that the manual workers employed on a building site would pay a substantial percentage of their small earnings to the foreman, to retain his goodwill. Do they do so because the foreman pays a similar percentage to the contractor, and the contractor to the official or politician who awards the contract? Or do they do it because Nigerian custom, unmodified in practice by modern legislation, still takes it for granted that at any level of society a patron needs to be rewarded with a gift? If the former, something may be achieved by punishing the official or politician; if the latter, the law will probably remain inoperative until public opinion catches up with it. Cases will just not be brought into court.

Again, in relation to tribalism Achebe writes as if this was an evil conjured up by the wicked leaders, especially those having Yoruba for a mother tongue. Tribalism he defines as, "discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth". Actually, it is nothing of the kind. It is discrimination in favour of those who speak the same language as oneself. The first definition suggests an aberration, akin to anti-semitism. The second is the most natural thing in the world. Which of us does not find it easier – much easier – to trust someone who speaks our own language than someone with whom we have to communicate through a lingua franca like French or Hausa? And yet this is the problem par excellence of all but about six states in Black Africa. Every independence leader recognized it and tried to deal with it by a conspiracy of silence. For so long as the forces of law and order remained in expatriate hands, the conspiracy worked. Then came the pressures from below. The key security posts had to be nationalized, and the politicians had to face the fact that they really trusted only those who were ethnically and linguistically the closest to themselves. Certainly, tribalism has not spread downwards from the top. It has seeped upwards from the bottom and forced recognition at the national level. That is not to say that it is getting worse. The tribes are being educated together, at least at the secondary and tertiary level. They are being employed together in both the public and the private sectors. Slowly the concept of a nation is growing. But there are many perilous years ahead, which will not be shortened by leaders who try to move too far ahead of public opinion.



Then, there is what Achebe calls the cult of mediocrity, "picking the third and fourth eleven to play for us", on which he blames the power and water-cuts experienced by Nigeria's cities, the overloaded telephone system and the motor traffic reduced to hooting helplessness. He even asserts that such inconveniences do not afflict him when he stays at the best hotel in Ouagadougou. Here he is being almost petulantly unfair to his compatriots, for the discomforts attendant on rapid urbanization are a measure of Nigeria's lead over Upper Volta, recently renamed Burkina Faso. If there is a certain under-performance in the professional class in Nigeria, as in other African countries which have only been independent for a generation or so, it is due, I believe, to the persistence of certain very deep-seated African social customs. First, African tradition is gerontocratic. It is much more difficult than in Europe for a younger person to be promoted over one senior in age and experience, and incompetent garrulity, though no more prevalent than elsewhere, may still be treated with more obsequious loyalty. Second, work that must be done alone is far more liable to interruption. Homes are full of women and children. Offices are beset by callers, and tradition still insists that callers must be politely received, and not hurried off the premises, even if their business is of a purely private nature. Worldly success carries the obligation to be patient and kind and generous and above all affable. Western countries are described with disapproval as places where a man cannot even call on his own brother without an appointment.

ment. African courtesy is certainly the thief of time, but it is not well described as a cult of mediocrity.

Achebe's hero among African politicians is Julius Nyerere. Ostensibly this relates to the Tanzanian leader's undisputed freedom from any stain of financial corruption, and to his insistence that cabinet members and party leaders must be clear of business entanglements. In these matters Tanzanians seem to him "to walk around six feet tall". The other side of the coin is of course the very tightly controlled nature of the Tanzanian economy, and the preparedness of the party to enforce the most uneconomic changes in the traditional patterns of land settlement and land tenure in the interests of socialist theory. One is given to suspect that a Nigeria governed by Achebe would be much more tightly controlled than the present one, and probably much less productive in consequence.

Nowhere does Achebe show a flicker of recognition that what is really wrong with Nigeria, as with nearly every other country of post-colonial Africa, is that systems of government are so organized as to discourage the farmer

## Sharing the spoils

Martin Lynn

J.D.Y. PEEL  
Ijesha and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom 1890s-1970s  
346pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50.  
0521225450

J.D.Y. Peel's *Ijesha and Nigerians* is one of the most important books to have appeared on Africa and the colonial period in recent years.

Ijesha, the Yoruba kingdom that is the subject of Professor Peel's study, was at the forefront of social change in colonial Nigeria. Peel's theme, however, is that while colonial rule had a considerable impact on Ijesha, what is remarkable is the way in which the basic framework of Ijesha politics and society survived. This central framework was not the "class" struggle between rulers and ruled so beloved of Marxists, nor the competition between lineages favoured by anthropologists. Rather, it was the immensely complicated but flexible network of patronage that, by the nineteenth century, had consigned around the Ijesha chieftaincy system, with a reciprocal transfer of spoils and resources up and down the network of offices existing between chiefs and the quarters they ruled. This system, argues Peel, survived the British takeover during the 1890s, by shifting its control over the spoils of war and trade to the new spoils of the colonial Native Authority network.

Colonial rule, however, still posed fundamental problems. The spread of coconut farming and new trading opportunities, the introduction of Western education, the growth of Christianity and the increase in labour migration, underpinned a wide-ranging transformation of Ijesha society. Not least, the new economic opportunities enabled young men to marry earlier and thereby break away from control by their elders, as well as bringing about the emergence of a new élite of traders, initially dependent on European firms but soon able to strike out on their own. Accompanying this was the spread of new social values, with "enlightenment" and "improvement" becoming the watchwords.

It is Peel's thesis that the traditional political and social structure of Ijesha in fact proved remarkably able to absorb these new pressures. Those who benefited from these opportunities – the traders for instance – did so because of their chiefly links and their "social credit" within the existing social structure of Ijesha. More importantly, their success led them to patronize the existing chieftaincy and patronage system of the town, a process deliberately encouraged on the other side by Owa (Kings) Arimolaran (1920-42) in his creation of an alliance between old and new élites.

However, this incorporation of the new forces in society was not without its difficulties. Absorption into the existing establishment was not fast enough for all. The Ijesha riots of January 1941 ostensibly resulted from opposition to chiefly corruption but in reality repre-

sented a communal, even populist, attempt to widen the patronage network. Thus the riot far from marking the disintegration of the traditional social and political structure in Ijesha, were evidence of its continuing validity, with the junior chiefs, many of them educated as traders, benefiting most from the changes that followed. Thereafter it was the educated who were increasingly to play the central role in politics, either as chiefs themselves or as advisers to chiefs. The eventual success of nationalist parties in Ijesha, ignored until they began to align themselves with the existing Ijesha political structure, was part of the "politics of improvement" that this new élite represented. By the mid-50s, the educated take-over and absorption within, the Ijesha political system was virtually complete.

Why did we not think, for example, of such concepts as Justice and Honesty, which cannot so easily be directed to undesirable ends? Justice never prompts the question: Justice for what? Neither does Honesty or Truth.

Oh, but they do!

All this is useful enough. Rarely can the history of an African community under colonial rule have been examined in such depth. Yet it is less the empirical dimension of *Ijesha and Nigerians* that gives it its importance than its theoretical thrust. Like an increasing number of Africanists, Peel expresses dissatisfaction with the "dependency theory" orthodoxy that has, to a large extent, dominated African studies over the past twenty years. As Peel points out, "dependency theory", with its stress on external, global, factors as the determinants of African social change has failed to take into account the immense variety of the African situation and, more importantly, the independent internal dynamics of African society. Similarly, says Peel, the empiricism of the so-called "Ibadan School of History", with its focus on national identity and the emergence of a national élite, has failed to provide a satisfying intellectual alternative.

Peel argues that, instead of the global structures and constraints of the dependency theorists, the starting-point of study has to be the discrete local community with its own internal dynamics. Here the basis of analysis cannot be the economic reductionism of Marxism with its stress on classes which do not exist in Africa. Rather, Peel argues for a view of society that takes into account the autonomy of politics, ideology and social values. It is only by accepting what he terms "the primacy of politics" and within politics the autonomous role of communal identities and interest groups as agents of social change, that events can be properly understood. The past is not, as some would argue, a "mythic charter", justifying present relationships, but a continuing and relevant entity in peoples' consciousness and thus in present politics. Events are the products of historical processes; more specifically they are the result of the interaction of communal identities and interest groups with existing political structures. Hence, Peel's stress on the importance of what he terms "the Past in the Present" – of the continued relevance of traditional institutions, which, despite the book's somewhat abstract style, should make an impact throughout the field of African studies and beyond.

## Fighting for the poor

Alan Angell

PHILIP BERRYMAN  
The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American revolutions  
452pp. SCM. £12.50.  
0334 002060  
KENNETH N. MEDHURST  
The Church and Labour in Colombia  
233pp. Manchester University Press. £25.  
07190 09693

Philip Berryman tries to do too much in one book. In 400 closely printed pages, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion* contains a description of political conflict in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, outlines recent changes in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council and discusses the way in which the Churches of Central America have tried to adapt to the violence which has so disfigured the countries of that area. And finally, it considers the ethical dilemmas of Christians faced with the challenge of revolution in Nicaragua, and civil war in El Salvador. In practice, however, "Christians" become "Catholics", for there is disappointingly little about the Protestant groups which have, for example, made so much progress in Guatemala.

The author brings interesting personal experience to bear on the subject. A former Catholic priest who worked for many years in Panama, he is now a Quaker, influenced by Marxism and extremely critical of the Catholic hierarchy. Central American bishops, with a few exceptions, get rough treatment. We are told that the bishops "as a group tend to reflect their own class perceptions rather than those of the majority in the church, who are the poor".

There is much that is of interest in the book, which will be read with profit by anyone concerned with the fate of the suffering countries in this area, or with the way in which Christians should respond to problems of violence, and suffering, and the abuse of state power – problems posed with an intensity reminiscent of the

era of fascism in Europe. At the most basic level, the book contains a great deal of information and a wealth of detail about local church groups such as the *comunidades de base* in Central America. It also provides a fascinating set of case-studies of the ways in which the Church responds to stark political choices.

And yet there are reasons for feeling some disquiet with Berryman's interpretation and reasoning. His overall pattern of analysis is excessively dualist. Societies are divided into the good (the peasantry, revolutionaries, most lower-level clergy) and the bad (the oligarchs, the military, most bishops and the US). The urban working class gets rather left out of this account; and the poor old middle class is only to be given "some" pastoral attention, to "avoid making the church a refuge of the disgruntled bourgeoisie, and the source of ideological ammunition for their attack on the revolution". In this account the Salvadorean Christian Democrats become a "hollow shell" – a verdict which diminishes the importance of a political tendency which is not irrelevant, though neither obviously left nor right, and is certainly representative of social groups which are neither oligarchs nor peasants.

The question of the attitude of the Church to violence is fundamental in Central America, and is discussed at great length. But does Berryman adopt double standards? At times he comes very close to doing so. His admiration for Camilo Torres's aim of making the Colombian Church more progressive will be shared by many, but does it follow that one also has to admire Torres's acceptance of, and involvement in, armed struggle? My own view is that such action simply prolonged and added to violence in a society which has seen far too much of it, and where the rather fragile democratic process needed support and strengthening, not attack. More relevant to Berryman's account is the murder of the Salvadorean guerrilla leader, Roque Dalton, by other guerrillas on charges of political betrayal (which we now know to be false). Berryman's account is sim-

ly evasive. He writes, very lamely, that "when they join guerrilla organizations people do accept the need for a high degree of discipline (including the extreme sanction of 'trial' and 'execution') as a necessary condition of revolutionary action". But they do not also accept injustice. Berryman tends to adopt a double standard towards violence of the right (which brutalizes and is indiscriminate) and of the left (which is selective – and ennobles?). Thus we read, "I would assert that people who had not actively opposed the violence of the powerful against the poor, at some cost to themselves, have no moral authority to question the violence used by the poor". No one would question that the only way Somoza could be overthrown was by armed insurrection, and few would doubt (Mrs Kirkpatrick apart) that the resulting society is a vast improvement on the previous régime. But violence does have terrible and destructive costs even if used in a just cause. And if it is used unjustly, even for a just cause, then it should be condemned whoever is responsible for it.

There is a tangled attempt to argue that democracy does not necessarily imply the holding of elections. This is justified by reference to the Greek roots of the word. But Nicaragua and El Salvador are not Greek city states, and if there is a better way of expressing democracy other than through free and competitive elections, no one has yet demonstrated it. Of course, it may well have been necessary to postpone elections in Nicaragua, and to limit free political expression because of pressures from the *contras* and the US (we did so in Britain when engaged in war), but that doesn't mean that Nicaragua has discovered a more perfect way of democracy. It simply means that countries under siege, can, and do, quite properly have other priorities.

It is a pity that Berryman spends so much time examining the right, for it would have been much more interesting to have learnt something about life in the guerrilla zones of El Salvador, for example. The account of strife-

torn Guatemala is, however, both vivid and very moving. But perhaps the best part of the book is the account of the political and religious development of Archbishop Romero. Here at least is one leading priest who fulfils Berryman's vision of a progressive clergyman – yet one who did not oversimplify.

The Church that Kenneth Medhurst writes about is very different from that of Nicaragua or El Salvador. Camilo Torres apart, the Colombian Church has had a keen sense of hierarchy, of traditional values and of the supreme need for institutional self-preservation. It has been unable to maintain its earlier unity in the face of social and economic changes, of increasing secularization and growing political and class conflict, though it is less divided than most Churches in Latin America. The response of the Church to these changes, and the internal divisions they produced, are well illustrated in its relationship with the labour movement. Few labour movements in Latin America have had such close relations with the Church, and Medhurst brings out very well the advantages and disadvantages of that relationship.

Medhurst writes in a more sober, modest and academic vein than Berryman, but he is dealing with problems as crucial to the Church's survival as those of the response to violence in Central America – even if they are less dramatic. But attempting to shape a labour movement simply as a bulwark against communism and liberalism, and as no real threat to the status quo, runs against the facts of industrial life. The major labour confederation in Colombia, the UTC, became less Catholic and more political, less passive and more militant, less identified with its vision of the needs of the Church and more with those of labour. The Church may no longer control the labour movement in Colombia, but it has been a profound influence on its development. There is little doubt that the relationship has been of benefit to the Church – whether it has been so to labour is another question.

### Macroeconomics

Michael Artis

Presents a compact, yet comprehensive, introduction to macroeconomics for students who already have some background in the subject. It emphasizes the need for analysis of open economies and the role of government policy, both of which are more realistic and useful than abstract theory.

0 19 87706 1 £15. 0 19 87707 X Paperback £6.95

### Microeconomics

Problems and Solutions

David M. Winch

This book provides an opportunity for students to practise the art of problem-solving on their own. It is in three parts: Part I contains problems, Part II contains hints, and Part III contains full solutions.

0 19 54045 8 Paperback £6.95

### Monopolistic Competition and International Trade

Edited by Henryk Kierzkowski

A collection of conference papers presented to a workshop at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, which throw new light on important questions: the role of R & D, the nature of gains from trade, the part played by scale economies and the arguments for intervention.

0 19 82847 5 £20

### The British Party System and Economic Policy, 1945-83

Studies in Adversary Politics

Andrew Gamble and S.A. Walkland

Examines the recent but widely-accepted thesis that the post-1945 British party political system and its general 'adversary' character has had a counter-productive effect on efforts to modernize the British economy.

0 19 87617 0 £17.50; 0 19 87617 2 Paperback £6.95 Clarendon Press

### Readings in the Economics of Law and Regulation

Edited by A.I. Ogus and C.G. Veljanovski

Designed primarily for lawyers and social scientists who are unfamiliar with the theory and techniques of economics, these readings and commentaries first provide an introduction to basic concepts, and then illustrate how widely varied areas of law may be subjected to economic analysis.

0 19 87614 2 £17.50, 0 19 87614 3 0 Paperback £10.95 Clarendon Press

### Tort Law

R.W.M. Dias and B.S. Markesinis

Written primarily for law students, this new textbook departs from its predecessors in at least two ways. First, it abandons the rigid distinction between contract and tort. Secondly, attention is drawn to the socio-economic factors that often guide the application of concepts in reaching decisions.

0 19 87615 3 £22.50, 0 19 87615 1 Paperback £15 Clarendon Press

### Anson's Law of Contract

Twenty-Sixth Edition

Edited by A.G. Guest

This is a major new edition of the comprehensive introductory textbook on the English Law of Contract. 'Anson is still unquestionably the best student's text... accurate, readable and topical.'

New Law Journal reviewing 25th edition

0 19 87614 8 £22.50, 0 19 87614 9 X Paperback £15.95 Clarendon Press

### Marxism and Law

Hugh Collins

'Hugh Collins' superb book... is a sympathetic explication of what a sensible Marxist analysis (of law) might be.' Cornell Law Review enthusiastically and warmly recommended.

New Law Journal

0 19 28514 6 £12.95 Oxford Paperbacks

Publication 18 October

## LAW & ECONOMICS FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) have undertaken a joint publishing programme of books which have grown out of CEPS research, conferences and seminars. The books in the new series will provide an up-to-date focus on specific aspects of fundamental medium- and long-term issues facing western Europe, and in particular the European Community.

The following are the first three books to be published:

### Europe's Stagflation

Causes and Cures

Edited by Michael Emerson

Eight leading macroeconomists examine the fundamental nature of Europe's stagflation and contribute substantially to an understanding of the most serious issues currently faced by European economies.

0 19 82848 7 £9.95 Clarendon Press

### Europe's Money

Problems of Co-ordination and Integration

Edited by Robert Triffin and Rainer S. Masera

Ten distinguished economists examine the problem of the European monetary system in the context of a world system which has led to stagflation and exchange rate crises.

0 19 82848 3 7 Forthcoming Approx £17.50

### European Industry

Public Policy and Corporate Strategy

Edited by Alexis Jacquemin

These papers, written by some of the leading experts in Europe on industrial issues, focus on the performance of European industry since 1973 and on industrial policy at international, national, and enterprise level.

0 19 82848 1 £20 Clarendon Press

Handwritten note: "The first three books to be published"



Valerie Pearl

JOYCE YOUNG  
Sixteenth-Century England  
444pp. Allen Lane. £14.95 (paperback, £2.95).  
07139 1243 X

*Sixteenth-Century England* is a most readable and welcome addition to a series which has already made its mark. The Pelican Social History of Britain. Since the mid-1970s there has been a great output of work on different themes of economic and social life under the Tudors. Urban and regional histories, occupational and industrial researches, investigations of land use and the state of agriculture, examinations of the role of the clergy and the place of the Church, scrutinies of trade and taxation, "reconstitutions" of population and analyses of birth and death-rates, diagnoses of morbid disease, arguments about poverty, crime and disorder, probes into family life, accounts of educational reform and estimates of literacy, measurements of the standard of living and enquiries into the cause and effects of the great surges in population and prices—all have been widely, but usually separately, debated by historians and, to some extent and not always convincingly, subjected to quantification, sociological theory and even psychological analysis. But there have been very few works which attempted to bring together the results of such studies to give us an overall picture of Tudor society—an up-to-date synthesis of research on how men and women conducted themselves in the family, in their communities, their places of work and leisure and in their acts of worship, how in all classes great political and economic events and changes affected their everyday experiences and, in the words of J.H. Plumb, general editor of the series, "why their lives, their beliefs, their activities were what they were".

It cannot be said that all these "hows" and "whys" are fully integrated in Joyce Young's

work. Some issues are still the subject of controversy and many still largely unexplored. Nevertheless, despite some weaknesses in the treatment of the social history of the period and its heavy stress on economic aspects (a reflection of recent published research?), the book is much more than just a useful summing-up of the state of knowledge. Professor Youngs over-modestly claims it as being "based largely on other people's research", but the result is a judicious survey based on wide and up-to-date reading with the author's own interpretations and critical views also being presented to the reader, such as her cautious scepticism about precise statistics for England's population for each year from 1541 ("based on the registers of just over four hundred out of some ten thousand parishes") and her emphasis on the continuity of the social life of the English, described as having "carried over from the medieval to the early modern world not only their identity as a people but a considerable part of their community life and institutions". It is indeed in relating Tudor society to its medieval background that Youngs makes one of her most valuable and original contributions.

In the organization of her book too she strikes an original note which, if not so "idiosyncratic" as she herself describes it, is unusual in giving a semi-thematic treatment within a rough chronology. The method succeeds in its declared aim of conveying "an impression of time" within a single century. The first five chapters, dealing mainly with the period up to the 1530s prior to the Henrician Reformation, are concerned variously with occupations, landlords and tenants, town-dwellers, internal migration and networks of affinity, rural and urban society, and rank and status. Next follows a group of chapters which deal largely with developments in mid-century: in two of them the phenomenal increases in both population and prices are authoritatively handled, as also is the development of the land market, a subject in which the author is an

acknowledged expert. In two more chapters the changes in religion are linked to an account of the clergy and of schooling, and are followed by a wide survey of sixteenth-century disorder, which includes rebellion, crime and litigation.

The remaining six chapters, roughly one-third of the book, cover in the main the reign of Elizabeth. They begin with some consideration of new occupational horizons, an introduction which provides a background to sections on poverty and social relief, the wealth and standing of different classes of society, marriage, the household and the family, and an evocative account of rural and small-town community life which may surprise those who see only increasingly oligarchic rule in the countryside and in country towns, ignoring such pointers as the development of parish councils and wards, sometimes annually elected, and the growth of measures of amelioration and self-government. In Bury St Edmunds, for example, the leading householders, even before the town was an incorporated borough, drew up by-laws for social legislation and community regulation. Youngs gives a vivid account of the tendency for towns to acquire the patronage of nearby parishes and to appoint lecturers—a remarkable advance in lay and civic influence and surely food for thought for those who find evidence only for the decay of towns in the sixteenth century. In fact, the author could have made more of self-regulation and municipal enterprise under the Tudors.

In such a wide-ranging survey there are inevitably topics which are undervalued or neglected. One of the most important is the literary, artistic and intellectual side of life, an omission which Youngs thinks may be excused because it was largely the culture of an élite. To include it would, she says, have necessitated also the treatment of popular culture, and that could not be done. It is claimed, because the culture of the great majority was "mainly oral

and functional". Moreover, "so little is known about it" that its inclusion "would have been to introduce an imbalance which is contrary to the purpose of the book". It seems a pity that these difficulties deterred her. Popular culture in its widest sense, including the *mentality* of a people and the way they occupied their leisure, is not the *terra incognita* here suggested.

There are a few minor misprints or misinterpretations which should be corrected in a second edition: blast furnaces produced cast pig-iron not iron ore (p239); aliens were naturalized not nationalized (p127); there were nothing like as many as 150 guilds in London (p84)—a common mistake, probably derived from a fifteenth-century list of "trades" much cited later; and there is some confusion about the numbers and proportions of aliens to adult males in London for 1500 when 3,000 aliens are cited (p128), a ratio of one in ten it is said (which would produce an impossibly high number of natives for that date), and for 1540 when the ratio is said to be one in three. Hard statistics for both strangers and the native populations of the metropolis are notoriously unreliable, as Youngs recognizes in another context. The best available figures (which tell a very incomplete story) suggest that the proportion of aliens to adult males in London peaked at about one in six and fell off as a proportion throughout the century as the native population rapidly increased. None the less, the author makes a valid point in showing how large numbers of aliens were rapidly absorbed in London.

In general, the thoroughness of Professor Youngs's reading is evident throughout the book. A discursive bibliography adds to its usefulness and its up-to-dateness is aptly demonstrated by the inclusion of David Palliser's *The Age of Elizabeth*, published only last year, in many ways a complementary work to the present volume.

## In Seisdon Hundred

Rosalie Mander

M.W. GREENSLADE (Editor)  
*A History of the County of Stafford:*  
Volume XX  
250pp. Oxford University Press. £60.  
019 7272651

This twentieth volume on Staffordshire in the Victoria History of the Counties of England deals with Seisdon Hundred (Part), comprising the south-west of the county with the additions of Tottenhall and Ambecote (Worcestershire). It would have been helpful if the map (circa 1850) had been given lines of demarcation to indicate which parts of it qualify for inclusion in the text. For instance, two properties of outstanding historical interest, Moseley Old Hall (Bushbury), where Charles II hid after the battle of Worcester, and Holbeach House (Himley), centre of the Gunpowder Plot, do not come in. Somewhere it should be stated whether they have already appeared in a previous volume or are due later.

It should also be stated what are the date limits: the present arrangement seems entirely arbitrary. The "Social and Cultural Activities" of Bilbrook cease with "well-dressing on Maundy Thursday in the latter 17th century", but the present heir to The Wombourne Woodhouse here supplies information as recently as 1983 about the property of which Pevsner in 1974 could observe that "it is an interesting house of which one would like to know more". The major estates of Wrottesley and Patshull are fully covered; Wrottesley surely holding a record for transference from rural to borough Councils, to finish up taken out of Staffordshire and put into the bureaucratically begotten county of West Midlands. The boundaries of the Stamford estates in Enville and Kolver can be tracked down under the names of various members of the Grey family, a process not made easier by the cross-reference system of the index.

With regard to errors concerning Wightwick Manor (Tettenhall)—now National Trust—I must declare my interest as I still live there. The land on which it was built in 1887 by Theodore Mander was bought from the Foley family, who then owned, but did not live at, the old

Wightwick Manor (built c 1662), at that time known as Manor Farm with stables and cowsheds in use. Contrary to what is stated here, the property never had anything to do with Wightwick Hall, built in 1895 on the parallel hill and having no connection with the Wightwick family and its title to Lordship of the Manor of Tottenhall Regis (1086). Richard Wightwick, co-founder of Pembroke College, Oxford (1623), should be included among county worthies.

The present volume maintains a high standard of clear type, notes on the page and documentation of early sources, but the series as a whole is still addressed to antiquarians by antiquaries and is of little service to a new generation of students to whom it is recommended by their tutors as a prime source for the projects which are the staple of post-war educational method. They find it confusing in arrangement and unhelpful in approach. (They would get on better with Shaw's 1801 *History and Antiquities* in which dead bones live.) Could there not be some concessions to those without immediate access to shelves of dictionaries, encyclopaedias and the DNB, such as a glossary and translation of archaic terms; of hides into hectares for a start? Other information could be more conveniently given in tabulated form, such as lists of parliamentary constituencies with their members and dates, perhaps incumbents of parishes and, in some cases, genealogies to make clearer the changes of name and title in family owners of estates.

There are also anachronisms. After the section on Churches in each area come the headings "Roman Catholicism" and "Protestant Nonconformity"; but no recognition of the growing number of practising non-Christians, though it is temples that are being built while churches become redundant. In a related connection there is nothing about the changes of ethnic life-style resulting from movements of population into these old Hundreds from the districts like Whitmore Reans in Wolverhampton. Here are the new "well-dressings": if the VCH is to maintain, let alone increase, its responsibilities as a work of reference it must take greater note of contemporary conditions that are the data of the future, and also make its presentation more user-friendly.

## Grass and the graduate

A. W. B. Simpson

DAVID LEIGH  
High Time: The shocking life and times of Howard Marks  
288pp. Heinemann. £9.95.  
0434 41339 9

Some years ago anxieties were expressed in official circles lest more graduates should be going into crime than joining the constabulary, and this racy essay in investigative journalism tells the story of a group of such graduates and their curious friends and acquaintances. Drug peddling was rife in Oxford in the 1960s and the university reacted to the problems of the time by dismantling its unpopular disciplinary system and letting the barbarians swarm over the frontiers with relative impunity. The central figure whose activities are chronicled in this book is Howard Marks, a product of what had by then become of Jowett's Balliol. Eventually, through a piece of adroitly conducted plea bargaining, he was to serve only a modest sentence of imprisonment. Even outside the ranks of the cognoscenti his name will be familiar since he became nationally known in 1973,

when he jumped bail, the press retailing alarming rumours of links with the Mafia, the IRA Provisionals and the Secret Service. His reappearance led to a sensational trial, partly conducted in camera, at the end of which the jury acquitted him; his sentence was contracted for a different offence. Also prominently featured is an associate of Marks, Graham Plinston (St Edmund Hall), present name and abode not known.

Supporting roles are played by an extraordinary list of individuals, most, it perhaps needs to be said, of unimpeachable integrity. There is the improbably but accurately named Francis Leader McCarthy Willis-Bund, one time Dean of Balliol, a man with many crosses to bear; intellectuals such as Christopher Hill; stern upholders of law and order such as Senior Proctor David Yardley and the indefatigable Inspector Strutt of the drugs squad; comic figures such as Melford Stevenson, in whose court Stephen Balogh once released laughing gas, so awful was the tedium; Yoko Ono; John Lennon . . . The book reads at times like a gossip column in some coterie magazine. Also appearing are some very unpleasant people indeed, for the world of the drug dealer is not a charming one. Leigh does not and cannot re-

veal his sources for the story, which we have to take on trust, though there is no reason to doubt his claim that no facts have been invented, and that all the people who figure in the book, some under altered names, are real. It is of course in the nature of the trade that an investigative journalist cannot tell all he knows, and no doubt the jolly air of the story owes something to reticence over the less pleasant aspects of the effects of drug dealing on the consumer. Many of the conversations have of necessity been, as Leigh puts it, reconstructed—more simply, invented. It may be right that they seem to reflect the inanity both of the times and those involved, as in this exchange between two Balliol men:

"Well, what would you do about society if it was you in charge?"  
"Smash it!"  
"Good Lord. I'm really surprised to hear you say that. Think what it would mean to your parents if the Communists took over here."

In general Leigh is content to tell his story of the robbers running rings around the cops without delving into possible explanations for the phenomena described, and he explicitly denies any wish to tell his tale from the viewpoint either of amateur moralist or policeman. Occasionally he theorizes—we are told for example that "The universal outlawing of marijuana has been one of the few more or less permanent triumphs of Western materialism", whatever that means. Inevitably, however, as all writers tend to do, he develops an affection for his subjects; the awful Howard Marks comes to be presented as a romantic figure, as in this lyrical passage describing an incident in his travels when he comes face to face with wild cannabis plants:

It was, he found to his disappointment, a curiously emotionless occasion. He and these plants did not really have much to say to each other. He climbed back into the car, gestured the chauffeur upwards, into the Himalayas. In the hills, he encountered an old dope-dealing Oxford chum—the way that Balliol

## US super-carrier

E.S. Turner

J.F. FEDERSPIEL  
*The Ballad of Typhoid Mary*  
Translated by Joel Agee  
172pp. André Deutsch. £6.95.  
023977066

"Typhoid Mary", otherwise Mary Mallon, was the most notorious, though not necessarily the most destructive, typhoid carrier in American annals. As a peripatetic cook, determined to practise her skills, she had exceptional opportunities to confer death on her contemporaries and she led the authorities a gruelling chase. She was the inspiration of Sunday supplements and the *New Yorker* profiled her during her lifetime. A famous caricature (reproduced on the jacket of this book) shows her tossing human skulls into a frying-pan.

Mary was discovered and nicknamed by a resourceful public health officer, Dr George A. Soper, who picked up her trail while investigating an epidemic in Ithaca, New York, in 1903. In 1907 she was the cause of another outbreak at Oyster Bay and after an extensive hunt was overpowered in a bruising scrimmage and made a "medical prisoner" in New York.

In 1910, invoking *habeas corpus*, a smart lawyer tried to have Mary put back into general circulation, but failed. However, soon afterwards, the New York Health Department freed her, with a solemn warning to wash her hands more carefully (she was a faecal carrier) and report periodically. Convinced she was harmless, she flouted her instructions and continued to spread the disease. In 1915 she caused a typhoid outbreak in a New York maternity hospital, where she cooked as "Mrs Brown", and was teased by staff who said she must be Typhoid Mary. Another posse of police and health inspectors seized her and carried her off to Riverside Hospital on North Brother Island in the East River. In 1923 she was given a comfortable cottage there and allowed to entertain friends, who did not stay for meals. She even went shopping in Manhattan. The cottage was her home until 1938, when she died. She had ceased to be rebellious and was said to have turned to religion.

Dr Soper wrote about her in the *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* in October, 1939. He respected her as a tough adversary. When he first met her she was about forty, blonde, blue-eyed, heavily-built and with a determined mouth. Not relishing his questions, she came at him with a carving-knife and he left smartly. Later, trying to convince her that she was a death-dealer, and urging her to have her gall-bladder removed, he offered to write her life story, concealing her real name, and give her all the profits, if she would co-operate, but in vain. Reference to his article in the *Bulletin* suggests he could have made a very fair job of it.

Certainly the lady deserved a better chronicle than is forthcoming in J.F. Federspiel's *The Ballad of Typhoid Mary*, presented as "a morbidly witty moral fable" and "the surprise literary hit of Europe in 1982". It is in no sense a ballad and is very largely fiction. "I have made use of what little information I have been able to gather; all the rest of Mary's reality is my own invention", he says; later he repeats that "a certain amount of the truth will have to be invented". So there it is: reality and truth are things to be fabricated.

According to Soper, Mary was probably from Northern Ireland, though she would say nothing about her origins. Federspiel, a Swiss, presents her as a thirteen-year-old immigrant from Switzerland, arriving in New York in 1868 in the plague-stricken *Lebnitz*, a night-mare vessel entirely coated with faeces. Mary's parents and two sisters had died with more than 100 others on the seventy-day voyage.

The narrative is now handed over to a dying paediatrician, Dr Raget, whose grandfather is said to have been a colleague of Dr Soper and an authority on Typhoid Mary. Raget tells how the waif is smuggled from the ship by a remarkably unfastidious doctor called Dorfheimer and taken direct to his home. Dorfheimer is a gloating devotee of *Alice in Wonderland*, a bad sign. Mary does not discourage his advances. Indeed she goes more than half-way to meet him; apparently she was debauched by the ship's cook in between seeing her family thrown overboard. To reward her protector Mary prepares his meals, and serve him right.

From now on her progress through a corrupt Gotham resembles that of one of the drabs who fall into the hands of lechers in the penny dreadfuls of G. W. M. Reynolds: Picked up by a servant, she is handed over to two elderly voluptuaries, repaying their attentions by killing off the unesteemed wife of one of them. And so on, in the spirit of Federspiel's epigraph—"Life is strange and the world is bad" (Thomas Wolfe). The world is at its worst when Mary, her lethal secret having been rumoured, is hired to nurse a retarded girl whose parents think this is a clever way to shorten her life.

The brief narrative is filled out with quirky philosophizings and lists of famous men who were being born or doing unusual things at the time. Even those who can convince themselves that it is a witty moral fable may find the taste a little rancid. It is as if someone had set out to write a life of the Elephant Man and, finding the facts scarce, had decided to give him a sleazy sex life.

"The world was not very kind to Mary", said Dr Soper. Will she end up like Jack Sheppard or Calamity Jane as a character for whom anyone can devise adventures? Will she perhaps become the heroine of a Broadway musical?

### October Books

#### Fiction

## SHORT OF GLORY

Alan Judd

His first novel, *A Breed of Heroes*, met with universal acclaim, now comes the story of a young man's baptism into the Diplomatic Service in 'Lower Africa'—a very fine novel sure to extend his already growing reputation.

£8.95

#### THE CRYPTO MAN

Kenneth Royce

Willie 'Spider' Scott, former ace catburglar, teams up with his old enemy, Detective Superintendent George Bulman, to fight a complex maze of blackmail, murder and corruption.

£8.95

#### Non-Fiction

## MARC TIME

Marc

The very best of Marc's cartoons from the past two years in *Private Eye*, *The Guardian* and *Time Out*.

£2.95

## BOTHIE THE POLAR DOG

Ranulph & Virginia Fiennes

A dog's eye view of the spectacular Transglobe Expedition from the most famous Jack Russell of them all, the only dog to go to both Poles and the only Jack Russell ever invited to Crufts.

Colour illustrations. £8.95

## SMITH AND SON

An Expedition into Africa

Anthony Smith

'What a thoroughly enjoyable, easy-going account of a long rough ride. The mutual concern and affection between father and his 19-year-old son that survived all setbacks is most touchingly evoked.'

Gavin Young  
£9.95

## COLONEL Z

The Secret Life of a Master of Spies

Anthony Read and David Fisher

Revealed for the first time—the astonishing story of Claude Dansey, Britain's most influential but, until now, little-known spy-master.

£10.95

## EMPIRES OF THE SKY

The Politics, Contests and Cartels of World Airlines

Anthony Sampson

A highly topical book that penetrates behind the images of the global airlines to show how they operate and who really runs them.

£9.95

## Hodder & Stoughton

# The ARDEN

## Shakespeare

is the most celebrated and fully annotated edition of Shakespeare available

NOW ALL THE PLAYS ARE PUBLISHED IN THE ARDEN SERIES

For full details visit your local bookseller or write to Methuen & Co Ltd, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EB



## Net results

### Malcolm Chapman

PAUL JORION  
*Les Pêcheurs d'Houat: Anthropologie économique*  
198pp. Paris: Hermann. 68fr.  
2 7056 5951 X

Houat is a small island a few miles from the southern coast of Brittany, near the Quiberon peninsula and close to the larger Belle-Ile. Its people number about 400; fishing is the basis of their economy, but tourism is increasingly important. *Les Pêcheurs d'Houat* is an "economic anthropology" of the local fishing industry, and contains many elements of a more general ethnography; it is a pleasant, interesting, well-researched and well-presented book (although it lacks an index, and the photographs are not all very clear). The fieldwork of which it is the result was carried out between 1973 and 1974, and changes since then are not taken into account. The cover note describes this as the "first anthropological study of a community of fishermen". It is not, and Paul Jorion himself makes no such claim.

The fishermen of Houat make their living mostly by fishing crabs, lobster, prawns and

scallops, and a large part of the book is given over to relatively technical and local details of this artisanal occupation. Attention is paid to the role of kinship in boat-ownership and crew-formation, and a useful last chapter deals with broad economic issues (such as the role of the banks in providing capital, the relationship between the pension system and the system by which the proceeds of a boat's catch are shared out, and the tacit methods of regulation of income and work-load).

France is, as Jorion tells us, a country where everything that is not at the centre is on the periphery, and he deals extensively with the economic and technological aspects of this peripheral status. We learn much less, however, about its linguistic or social aspects, which are intimately bound into the "economic" issues. Houat is at the extreme eastern end of the area in which the Breton language is still spoken, and we are told that Breton is still spoken among the old people, and understood by many of the middle-aged. But it enters no further into the ethnography. We have here an ethnography of a French-speaking community, written by a native French speaker.

More serious, perhaps, is the absence of any systematic discussion of the social marginality of Houat. We are offered some fascinating

clues as to how its people view their own moral, social and financial position in relation to the mainland, but that is all. The social detail provides an authentic flavour of life in a small Breton fishing community, but it is scattered through the work, and is sometimes coloured by a rather reflexive anti-clericalism, which goes along, of course, with the sub-Marxian intuition that the "economy" should be the primary object of ethnographic study. Jorion also omits some relevant information, I think, by assuming in his reader too much background knowledge of French social life – a typical failing in anthropologists describing a culture close to their own.

Tourism is important to Houat, but Jorion disapproves of and to a great extent disregards it because he considers the job of anthropology to be the study of societies that are "peripheral to the dominant system", and tourism is part of that system. Yet Jorion was in Houat in order to look at a geographically peripheral, technologically backward, traditional society. So are the tourists, and they pay good money for the view. So are not the "economy", and the social and moral aspects of peripherality irrevocably bound up together? And does it still make sense for the anthropologist to seek only the "traditional" in the societies he studies?

## Cube's roots

### George Mikes

ANDRÁS MEZEI  
*Magyar Kocka*  
437pp. Budapest: Magvető. 45ft.

The Rubik Cube was one of the most successful and lucrative games ever invented, rivaling Monopoly and Scrabble. People, all over the world, bought more than 100 million Cubes and company directors, agents and pirates became millionaires as a result, yet the original manufacturers of them in Hungary went (practically) bankrupt. How to achieve such an amazing feat? Thereby hangs the cautionary tale related in this book.

The whole thing started on a purely practical level. Ernő Rubik, an engineer, attempted to construct a large cube made from small cubes (in rows of two first, then of three) so that the small cubes could be turned freely in all directions inside the big one – a difficult task which became an obsession. While wrestling with the problem, however, he realized that if the revolving cubes were painted in different colours, the whole thing could be turned into a puzzle. Thus Rubik eventually became the richest man in Hungary: the first true Communist dollar millionaire and an international celebrity.

Rubik first offered the Cube to a Hungarian toy-factory, Polytoys, who delayed replying for nine months. In 1977, however, some Cubes were manufactured but they created very little interest and lay collecting dust on the shelves. In the end the Hungarian mafia (not an official body but a powerful international organization all the same) woke up and began to act. Tibor Laczi, a Hungarian living in Vienna, realized the possibilities of the Cube and alerted another Hungarian, Tom Kremer, living in London, who in turn made a contract with a large American firm under Hungarian control. The Cube had started on its rise to world fame.

Ideal, the American firm, ordered a million of them, an unprecedented order in the annals of Hungarian toy production, and the Hungarians could not cope. Then, somewhat surprisingly, it became evident that the Cube was not protected by patent. Ideal called it the Rubik Cube and tried, at least, to protect the name. Difficulties increased. Hungary could not deliver the required quantity – 2 millions, 4 millions, as demand increased, but West European and American firms could; while pirates in Hong Kong and Taiwan proved even more efficient. Watching helplessly while a tremendous opportunity was being missed, the Hungarian firms lost their head. They tried to deal with Japan directly – although Ideal had the exclusive rights. They went behind Ideal's back but approached one of that company's own agents. This attempt failed to increase confidence in the Hungarians. But then they managed to do something even more disastrous, ordering Rubik Cubes from Hong Kong and passing them off as "Made in Hungary". The result was that out of the 1 million Cubes sent to Switzerland 800,000 were returned as reject.

The implications of all this became viler and as András Mezei describes involved a dash between Western and Communist production methods. As the Cube grew into a world-wide craze, the Americans wanted more and more of them and wanted them immediately. When urgent orders and desperate telexes arrived, the Hungarians called committee meetings, various organizations sent "memos" to one another and often failed to reply. The Americans wished to lower the price, to sell more; the Hungarians wanted to raise it to make the most of the huge demand. And there was another significant difference in outlook: Americans were concerned with selling – selling being the problem, almost the religion of the West in Hungary, where good things are leaped up eagerly, selling is no problem but production is. The world left the Hungarians behind. While they were holding committee meetings, arguing, quarrelling, scheming, and blaming one another for gigantic failure, the Cubes were selling in its millions.

But the Hungarians are, after all, clever people and, it seems, have learnt the main lesson from the affair, that Socialism is the hardest way to Capitalism.

## Pioneers of distinction

### David Rosand

WILLIAM C. SEITZ  
*Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*  
490pp, with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Harvard University Press for the National Gallery of Art, Washington. \$60.  
0 674 00215 6  
SERGE GUILBAUT  
*How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, freedom, and the Cold War*  
Translated by Arthur Goldhamer  
277pp, with black-and-white illustrations. University of Chicago Press. £18.  
0 226 31038 8

The position of Abstract Expressionism within the history of modern art seems securely established. In the permanent installations of the recently reopened Museum of Modern Art the galleries devoted to the New York school fully attest to both the status and the stature of that generation of American artists. Indeed, as we look back from a contemporary art scene that can only be described as one of ferment – less generously, as one of chaotic groping and posturing – the Abstract Expressionist canvases at MoMA affirm their aesthetic dignity with special relevance. Created with the radical enthusiasm of a genuine avant-garde and received as serious challenges to traditional values, social as well as aesthetic, these paintings now accept the reverent admiration of the public with all the confidence of confirmed classics. What once seemed impetuous and uncontrolled now appears as harmonious structure; what was once resented as private and enigmatic, arrogant solipsism, has succeeded in reaching out and touching a large public. Celebrated as the "triumph of American painting", Abstract Expressionism signalled the coming-of-age of art in America and the emergence of New York as the modern art capital of the western world.

And yet, despite success and acceptance, Abstract Expressionism continues to pose

problems; despite an enormous critical and historical literature, including innumerable exhibition catalogues, the challenge of interpretation remains. In its own way, each of the books under review seeks to meet that challenge; each refuses to allow those canvases to retire to the comfort of the old master galleries. Their perspectives and approaches to the subject, however, are radically different.

The late William Seitz was a close observer of the movement he wrote about, a painter, critic and curator who participated in those events. Originally submitted as a PhD dissertation to Princeton University in 1955, *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America* had been available only in photocopies of the typescript. Now, nearly thirty years later, it appears in print under the auspices of the National Gallery of Art as one of the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Studies in American Art, with a warm foreword by Robert Motherwell, one of the leading protagonists (and certainly the most frequently quoted) in Seitz's account, and an appreciative introduction by the critic Dore Ashton. Hailing the book as a "classic" in the literature on Abstract Expressionism, Motherwell confirms the special qualifications of Seitz, quoting with approval the author's own self-evaluation: "Whatever unique qualities this book may have . . . arise in part from the fact that it combines the viewpoint of a painter with that of an art historian. If such a blend can constitute a method, it lies in an attempt to reconcile empathy with fact." Throughout the book – which did not win academic acceptance without some special intervention on the part of Alfred Barr – one is aware of that empathy as Seitz responds to the creative process, to technique and materials, and, above all, as he listens to the voices of the artists themselves – recorded in their own occasional writings, in transcripts of meetings, or in Seitz's recollections of discussions at the Artists Club. It is this particularized intimacy of the observing participant that provides much of the conviction of Seitz's narrative.

The book is not a history of the movement.

Organized thematically, it moves deliberately from formal analysis – at times academically Wolffian in its search for "analytical categorization" – to interpretation, from descriptive to transcendental criticism. Across an expanding thematic grid is plotted the art of six individual painters: Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and Mark Tobey, who are "presented both as artists of distinction and as pioneers". The selection of these "key artists" may appear somewhat less than fully compelling, especially in the retrospect of three decades. Surely the inclusion of Tobey as a representative of Abstract Expressionism runs counter to our sense of the spirit and scale of that movement. The association violates the style and aesthetic of the painter himself; never really of New York, Tobey belongs elsewhere and has indeed been acknowledged the leading master of a North-West Coast school, responsive to the spiritual values of the Orient. Seitz is obviously deeply sympathetic to this art, but his suggestive linking of its mysticism with the urban existentialism of New York must now seem rather forced.

Hans Hofmann, on the other hand, although significantly older than the others, was indeed a major presence on the New York scene, especially as an articulate and influential teacher; but one may harbour some doubt about the actual importance of his own paintings to the development of Abstract Expressionism in America. Seitz's choice of artists might not seem so idiosyncratic were it not so restrictive, and the absence of Jackson Pollock from his core group can only be seen as a glaring omission. Pollock, to be sure, does figure in Seitz's commentary, where his art evidently causes the critic a certain discomfort, implicitly questioning aspects of Seitz's preferred aesthetic, especially his valuation of the brush:

Keeping the bond between content and material in mind, it may be of value to consider the tendency toward abandonment of the close contact that painters have always maintained between the hand and the painting surface. Is the unprecedented method of

Jackson Pollock – whose effectiveness, for himself at least, he has proved – the isolated solution of one painter? Or does it portend a general change in technique?

Pollock posed a particular problem – and we must remember that Seitz was writing in the early 1950s – and yet out of his own doubt Seitz produced some of the most responsive criticism in his book. None the less, we sense that he found in the more overtly crafted surfaces of Tobey an aesthetic more congenial to him, just as he found in Tobey's oriental mysticism the articulation of a kind of spiritual space in which one could transcend the realities of picture-as-object to confront some absolute reality.

If this aspect of Seitz's criticism has not weathered the passage of three decades, his insistence upon values that we might otherwise term humanistic does share in a broader response to and, necessarily, defence of Abstract Expressionism. "Expressionist brushwork", he writes, "establishes a human scale", and both gesture and scale become essential constituents of what we may call the affect of many Abstract Expressionist paintings. Seitz's own painter's sensibility, his awareness of the signifying range of a single stroke, yields some particularly fine observations – such as this passage in response to de Kooning:

From reinforcing vertical, to human gesture, to assertion of space, to description of image – such a sequence is often the meaning-path of one stroke of the brush. In one movement an arm is drawn, fleshy bulk is modeled, and a pocket of recession is formed. If a structural weakness is sensed, as the brush moves its path must change in order to reassert geometrical form and tie image to format. And as the painter's sensibility shifts from intellect to feeling or from intensity to delicacy, the brush follows, solidifying changing meanings in changing form.

More than any other modern style, Abstract Expressionism exalted the personal freedom of the artist while insisting, as a necessary corollary, upon a fundamental pictorial responsibility. "Modern art is related to the problem of the modern individual's freedom", wrote Motherwell in 1944; "For this reason the his-

Longman

## The right word in the right place makes all the difference

Put your finger on the precise word . . . the apt phrase . . . the modern definition . . . every time!

LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE and ROGET'S THESAURUS. Together they provide a virtually inexhaustible word bank for the writer, reader, speaker, student, crossword puzzler and word game addict.

### LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

The most comprehensive and up-to-date authority on English used throughout the world. Over 225,000 definitions, plus usage notes, etymologies and pronunciations. Developed by experts and specialists to give you the accurate information you need today. Published 8 October 1984

£14.95 Thumb-indexed edition £17.95

### LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Both – in a word – indispensable!

### ROGET'S THESAURUS

The original, unabridged Thesaurus – brought right up-to-date for the present day user. Over 20,000 additions and relocations, plus an improved layout that makes it even easier to use.

£8.95 Thumb indexed edition £12.95

### ROGET'S THESAURUS

of English words and phrases.

THE BOOKER PRIZE  
THURSDAY NIGHT AT 8.30  
IN A LIVING ROOM NEAR YOU

4

A LONDON WEEKEND TELEVISION PRODUCTION FOR CHANNEL 4



tory of modern art tends at certain moments to become the history of modern freedom."

Written before the end of the war, Motherwell's statement – like those of other artists – enunciated the aesthetic morality of a generation emerging from political disillusionment and frustration. Just these elements are central to Serge Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, a "materialist history of the art of the New York school". The title of his book announces its thesis with a candour at once aggressive and ingenious. Guilbaut's is "a social study of abstract expressionism which attempts to grasp the reasons American avant-garde art took the abstract form that it did as well as the reasons that form proved so successful."

Recounting the ideological vicissitudes of the American intelligentsia from the Depression to the end of the Second World War, he deliberately locates the artists and their art in that larger political matrix – "injecting art history with a dose of real history", as he proudly puts it, and "dragging art's ideal values through the mud of politics and ideology". The impulse is a salutary one, for Guilbaut does indeed succeed in re-animating the debates and the protagonists of that early period of moral struggle on the Left. But as the story is moulded increasingly to fit the thesis, one loses faith in the historian's revision. The retreat from representation, one of the crucial directions of the movement, is reduced to a conspiratorial caricature by Guilbaut: "the avant-garde's 1947-48 decision to abandon representational [i.e. representational] painting". Beyond a rejection of the art of propaganda and illustration that was the temptation of the 1930s, this complex development becomes essentially a deliberate escape from social responsibility into a self-deceiving apolitical individualism that played into the hands of the dominant liberal ideologues. The creative freedom celebrated by Abstract Expressionism, by the artists and their supporters, was, in effect, co-opted by the United States Information Service and other "cultural" agencies of the Cold

War. Unwittingly, according to Guilbaut's thesis, the new art lent itself to the new ideology in its war against Communism.

The leading voices in this account are those of Meyer Schapiro, Dwight Macdonald and Clement Greenberg, whose writings, as well as the pages of the *Parisian Review*, are cited to trace what Guilbaut calls "the de-Marxization of the American intelligentsia". But Guilbaut is a forceful reader of his texts, and his interpretations involve some very partial citation and, at times, misrepresentation. At the outset, for example, Guilbaut argues for a "conceptual and ideological shift" in Meyer Schapiro's thought between 1936 and 1937, before the paper delivered before the American Artists' Congress, "The Social Bases of Art", and his response to Alfred Barr's formalism, "The Nature of Abstract Art", published in the *Marxist Quarterly*. Given his own ideological commitment, Guilbaut can hardly be expected to recognize certain basic assumptions in Schapiro's texts, or to recall Schapiro's opening declaration of 1936 or to be attentive to its implications: "When we speak in this paper of the social bases of art we do not mean to reduce art to economics or sociology or politics. Art has its own conditions which distinguish it from other activities. It operates with its own special materials and according to general psychological laws."

If there are no real heroes in Guilbaut's reductionist narrative, there are certainly villains – Arthur Schlesinger Jr and his "upbeat ideology", publisher Henry Luce, the art dealer Samuel Kootz, and George C. Marshall, among others – and victims, especially artists whose reputations have faded. "What has become of all the Byron Brownes, the Carl Holtyes, the Karl Knaths, the Balcomb Greenes, and the Charles Seligers?" Guilbaut asks rhetorically in the hurt tone of the egalitarian suspecting conspiracy from above.

American art and American politics are the bed-fellows of one aspect of Guilbaut's thesis – originally submitted as a PhD dissertation at UCLA in 1978. Guilbaut himself is French,

and running through his study is a strong vein of Gallic resentment, sounded initially in his title. New York's victim is Paris. And here, too, history becomes conspiracy, as the transatlantic cultural shift adds a final, foul blow to the fate of France, "which had lost nearly everything in the war – some said even her honor".

With Guilbaut's intention to write a "social study" of Abstract Expressionism – to investigate the increasingly dynamic yet problematic position of art within American society, to question the assumed independence of ideas and art in a "free" society, the cultural manifest destiny proclaimed by post-war America – one can have little quarrel. Yet to write such a study, one that offers a persuasive account, requires a critical approach more sophisticated than Guilbaut's, more sensitive to the deeper complexities of human involvement in and responsibility for historical events. And in the case of art history it must demonstrate a sensitivity to the ways in which art operates and signifies. As a historian of art, in particular, Guilbaut does not always seem in control of his materials: eg. it comes as a surprise to learn that in the period 1947-9 Mark Rothko was "moving away from explicit erotic imagery" (my italics) or that the Ninth Street exhibition in 1951 "presented the work of sixty-one artists, most abstract expressionists (except for Bazilioes, Gottlieb, Newman, and Rothko)" (my italics) – one would like to know Guilbaut's working definition of Abstract Expressionism.

In only one instance does Guilbaut attempt a more or less sustained interpretation of an individual picture, the truest test of the critic. The picture is Jackson Pollock's "Sounds in the Grass: Shimmering Substance" (1946). In that same year, Guilbaut observes, *Fortune* published an article, "coldly detached and therefore troubling, on the atomic explosion at Bikini", which included as illustrations two abstract paintings by Ralston Crawford. Guilbaut's method is to build upon coincidence.

The same public that was reading about the im-

portance of abstract and modern art in magazines like *Fortune*, the same people who were being told the new art's attempts to represent the unrepresentable and to illustrate the unthinkable and who were thereby made ready to accept the unthinkable in their everyday lives, were also prepared to accept Pollock's "drippings" without undue astonishment, particularly since Pollock's work at this time (the 1940s) was rather close to depictions of fragmentation and disintegration.

And from this Pollock's paintings emerge as intelligible symbols of the new society: "Although these first 'over-all' paintings were hard for a majority of the public to accept because of their uniformity and chaotic composition, informed readers of magazines like *Fortune* could see that they actually represented the modern age, the Atomic age." Guilbaut – evidently convinced by the aesthetic policies of "magazines like *Fortune*" – proceeds to a reading of "Sounds in the Grass: Shimmering Substance", inversely truncating its title while harnessing the canvas to his own thesis:

In *Shimmering Substance*, the commas of color in the centre of the canvas are placed on a dazzling surface created by a grid of thick white strokes and from a luminous yellow circle, a center of energy that can be understood as a sun. The effect recorded by Pollock is one of bedazzlement, such as can be caused by staring too long at the sun, leading to complete perceptual disintegration. The shattering of objects and forms by light is more complete and radical than anything accomplished by the Impressionists. Things disintegrate not only on the surface, as seen, but also in their very essence, owing to the deeply searing quality of the light. What Pollock depicts is a source of energy that is not merely powerful but also destructive. What is shown, in short, is not the sunbats equivalent, the atomic bomb, transformed as myth.

One can only wonder about Guilbaut's familiarity with this canvas in the Museum of Modern Art – which measures only 30 1/4 by 24 1/2 inches, a rather intimate scale for Pollock – and question the legitimacy of such a wildly apocalyptic reading. The entire passage epitomizes Guilbaut's work, enthusiastic and intelligent yet naive and reductive, blinkered by its own agenda.

## More speech than song

Winton Dean

CURTIS A. PRICE  
*Henry Purcell and the London Stage*  
380pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.  
0521 23831 5

By common consent Purcell was the greatest English dramatic composer of his age, and perhaps of any other. Yet his fifty stage works, although they fall into all manner of different categories, include only a single short through-composed opera; and although he had gifted contemporaries also writing for the theatre, England, unlike Italy and France, failed to develop a national form of opera. This abortive situation is generally blamed on Purcell's early death, followed ten years later by waves of Italian invaders, and the obstinate English addition to a bastard form of semi-opera in which the plot was confined to spoken dialogue, the principal characters did not sing, and most of the music was shunted off into independent masques.

Curtis A. Price in this provocative, closely argued and deeply researched book, by far the most thorough study of Purcell's theatre music, begins by questioning "the assumption that opera in the Italian style [ie through-composed] is the apex of music drama and that those hybrids which mix songs and speech are necessarily inferior". He accepts a recent view that the semi-opera was a stable, rational and successful form. Had this been so, it would scarcely have dried up within a few years of Purcell's death. There is nothing "arrogant" in the conclusion that opera is monarch of the musico-dramatic stage, since it represents a fusion of the two arts on the largest scale and dissolves plot and characters in music. For that reason alone *Dido and Aeneas*, though (as Dr Price demonstrates) incomplete and untypical of its age, is a more satisfying work of art than any of the semi-operas.

Price is reluctant to admit this, but is too good a scholar to suppress evidence to the contrary, which from time to time spins him

round. He acknowledges a serious imbalance between music and drama over the whole period, and though he makes heroic efforts to disentangle the complex political allegories behind *Dioclesian* and *King Arthur*, they remain a matter for contention, confuse the artistic picture and sometimes inhibit the composer. *King Arthur* may be "an audacious study in irony", but no one can be sure at what or whom it is directed. As Price pertinently remarks, "Tell me why" in *Dioclesian* should have been a fragment of an Italianate opera, not a bit of musical fluff for an overblown masque", and the scene for Grimbold and Philidel in Act II of *King Arthur* shifts to true opera in that "the main plot is borne, if only briefly, by music". The trouble is that such occasions are so rare. There is a touch of special pleading in his claims for *The Fairy Queen* as a Shakespeare-Purcell union, but he ends equivocally with the admission that the music is no help to the play and Purcell's cynical approach to the weddings undermines its romantic spirit. On the other hand he makes out a case that the Shadwell-Locke *Psyche* (1675) is more akin to *dramma per musica* than any of Purcell's stage works except *Dido* and "came much closer to pushing English into the operatic mainstream" than Purcell's semi-operas, which take care to keep music and speech on different planes.

More light is thrown on this in Price's study of the incidental music to plays, which has never before been subjected to such an exhaustive scrutiny. He shirks nothing, exploring the theatrical and social background in an age of perpetually shifting political loyalties, and examining the text of every play in order to assess Purcell's contribution. Here again we find both critic and composer apparently in the posture of Janus. Price argues in effect that some of the incidental music is more operatic than the semi-operas, because it advances the action. He demonstrates Purcell's command of dramatic irony and insight into character, and rightly calls him a tragedian at heart, interested primarily in individuals. Yet he was content to allow offstage professional singers to express the emotions of silent actors, leaving the occa-

sional utterances of the latter to be set by other composers, generally Eccles.

The music can clarify the drama (it is often hard to decide whether the author's intentions are serious, comic or satirical), or at least tell us how Purcell viewed it, though there are occasions when we scarcely know whether he is interpreting the dramatic situation, responding to some strong verbal association, or simply being cynical. Elsewhere his finest contributions may be irrelevant (*The Maid's Last Prayer*) or less suited to the context than to the Last Night of the Proms (*Don Quixote*). Price more than once makes the valid point that "Purcell's music, which lies at the heart of the drama, would almost certainly be misinterpreted without some knowledge of the plot". This impales us on the horns of another dilemma. How can we appreciate Purcell's refinements when there is little chance of these obscure and complex plays (apart from Congreve's two comedies, which surely require their original music) ever reaching the modern stage? For many of them Purcell only wrote two or three songs. The semi-operas (including *The Indian Queen*, which for no clear reason is placed in a separate category) are a different matter; the music is sufficient justification for revival, but the spoken drama should be included in order to place it in context, though this entails a double cast.

Occasional equivocation on aesthetic problems in no way devalues Price's book, which is packed with sage observations on every aspect of Purcell's art, not least his personal use of harmony and tonality. It is illustrated with seven plates and 145 musical quotations, all apposite and some extensive (though page 99 has a reference to something that fails to answer its cue). They are not confined to Purcell; justice is done to Eccles, Locke, Banister and others, not excluding the much-maligned Grabu, whose *Albion and Albanus* is shown to

have failed for political rather than artistic reasons. Politics were also responsible for keeping *Dido and Aeneas* off the public stage. Price is illuminating on its political allegory and the links with *Measure for Measure* at the 1700 revival which both truncated the music and modified the play. Apart from some unnecessary rhetorical questions at the start, this is perhaps the most penetrating study of Purcell's masterpiece.

Price shows an impressive command of all sources, musical and literary, quotes unpublished variants, and frequently corrects the text of the Purcell Society editions, for whom both the harmony and the words sometimes proved too juicy. He also takes full account of the work of his predecessors. The one thing he cannot quite dispel is a sense of genius running to waste. The emphatic statement in his preface that "Purcell was a brilliant music dramatist, but he was not an opera composer" could be accepted as the literal truth had the score of *Dido* not survived. Masterpieces are not created by accident; since it does survive, it would be more accurate to call him an opera composer who, whether through disinclination, lack of opportunity or the oppressive weight of the Zeigist, could not fulfil his potential. The powerful English tradition of spoken drama may not have been the sole or even the main obstacle; against a more stable political background, instead of one that put *Dido* rapidly out of court, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Purcell, endowed as he was with greater creative genius, could have established himself as an English Lully, with immeasurable consequences for English opera. Joseph Machlis's *The Enjoyment of Music* (originally reviewed in the *TLS* of January 16, 1959) has been reissued in a fifth, revised edition, adding and substituting the discussion of new works (646pp. Norton. £18.95. 0 393 95297 5).

LONDON

Monday 22nd October 1984 at 9.30 am

## Old Master Drawings

On view: Wednesday 17th October to Friday 19th October  
9 am to 4.30 pm and Sunday 21st October, 11 am to 4.30 pm



Francesco Pontebasso, *The Message of Dante to the Venetians*, brown ink and grey and black wash, 21.2 by 14.3 cm. £300-400

This is one of a group of drawings in the sale which are preparatory studies for the *Opere di Dante* published in Venice by Antonio Zatta in 1757-58 and dedicated to the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

This sale will include six hundred lots with estimates ranging from £50 to £1,000

**SOTHEBY'S**

FOUNDED 1744

34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA Telephone: (01) 493 8080 Telex: 24454 SPBLON G



"... Churchill & Roosevelt is an exemplary work of editing and annotation."  
— Arthur J. Schlesinger, Jr., THE ATLANTIC

## Churchill & Roosevelt

The Complete Correspondence

Edited by Warren F. Kimball

"I am fed up with De Gaulle.... If these were peace times it wouldn't make so much difference but I am absolutely convinced that he... is injuring our war effort and that he is a very dangerous threat to us.... he would doublecross us both at the first opportunity."

— Roosevelt, June 17, 1943

"I had a jolly day on Monday on the beaches and inland Normandy.... After doing much laborious duty, we went and had a plug at the Hun from our destroyer, but although the range was 6,000 yards he did not honour us with a reply."

— Churchill, June 14, 1944

This three-volume work is the first complete compilation of the correspondence of Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, 30 percent of which has never before been published. Including every written communication that passed between Churchill and Roosevelt during the five and a half years of their wartime leadership, this body of material is essential to an understanding of the politics and strategy of World War II as conducted by two of history's most charismatic men.

To their inherently fascinating correspondence Kimball has added headnotes—commentaries that not only set the context of specific documents but also provide both an overview of international relations of the period and interpretations based on his extensive research for these volumes. \$162.50 prepublication price until December 31, 1984, thereafter \$195.00 (U.S.).

Princeton University Press

15A Eppim Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3JY



"I am not unduly disturbed about our respective responses or lack of responses from Moscow. I have decided they do not use speech for the same purposes that we do."

— Roosevelt, October 27, 1942

"Peace with Germany and Japan on our terms will not bring much rest to you and me (if I am still responsible). As I observed last time, when the war of the giants is over, the war of the pygmies will begin. There will be a torn, ragged and hungry world to help to its feet; and what will Uncle Joe or his successor say to the way we should both like to do it?"

— Churchill, March 17, 1945



# American notes

## Christopher Hitchens

### New York

Ever since the New York newspaper strike of 1963, there has been a wide and admiring audience for the *New York Review of Books*. Initiated as a stopgap alternative to print-starvation and the lack of intellectual fodder, it climbed to an eminence which is now probably beyond dispute. Even its numerous detractors, who have not forgiven its 1960s promiscuity and who moaned with delighted *Schadenfreude* when it took a pratfall over Norman Mailer and Jack Henry Abbott, pay it the compliment of buying, reading and bitching about it. It has not so far reviewed my recent book, so I hope that I will not be misunderstood if I say that its first and only editor, Robert Silvers, is a highly and justly respected man.

The reputation of the *Review* (henceforth, *NYRB*) derives from its standards, but also from its independence. It was set up in order that it might never be beholden. No conglomerate interest, public or private, has ever been mentioned in the same breath as the editorial *équipe*. Has this been too good to last?

There was a brief rumour of purchase a few months ago, when Mortimer Zuckerman of the *Atlantic Monthly* was bruited as a bidder. This proved to be a mere flirtation, broken off when Mr Zuckerman bought another, more commercial property in the form of *US News and World Report*. But the prospector and the prospect are not the same thing. The *NYRB* is now entertaining an offer from a Mississippian entrepreneur.

To describe Mr Ray Hederman as an "unknown quantity" — which is the tradition when talking of aspirant proprietors — would be boring but truthful. His family owned newspapers in Jackson; newspapers which, so they say, found the temptations of racial equality unusually easy to resist. Irrelevant as that may be — because we all know that all fortunes have to start somewhere — the Hederman family seems to have been in the newspaper business since 1878. The cost of launching it, back in 1963, was about \$200,000, and although it has become more prosperous since, it has retained a pleasing air of scruffiness and improvisation in its offices. The original management group was Robert Lowell and his then wife Elizabeth Hardwick, Jason and Barbara Epstein, Whitney Ellsworth and Robert Silvers. These six, the holders of what is termed the "A" or "management" stock, would receive nine out of every ten of the dollars now on offer. This, together with some reservations about the

source of the bid, has created frowns and wrinkles among the "B" or "investment stockholders" list. A stipulation of the original "float", which now comprehends not just the *NYRB* but its lucrative and distinguished book club and other ancillaries, was that any liquidation of same would be more strictly egalitarian.

Under that agreement, importantly, there was almost no chance of any shareholder gaining control. No doubt all offers for the *NYRB* will come festooned with safeguards and guarantees, and no doubt Mr Hederman will be persuasive on the point of *pecunia non olet*. Apparently, too, the proposed management contract would keep Silvers in the editorial chair. But one still wonders why such an enterprise, fragile yet durable over two decades, needs an "owner" at all.

### Los Angeles

There are more than 130,000,000 cars in the United States, four million of them packed into freeway-infested Los Angeles County. Of these, the thirty most beautiful and striking ones are in the new Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), which, in a happy coincidence of contexts, is putting on an exhibition called *Automobile and Culture*.

MOCA is located in a well-restored warehouse, rather archly entitled "The Temporary Contemporary" and situated in the Little Tokyo section of downtown L.A. The centrepieces of the current show are the sleek and gleaming vehicles themselves, including some superb 1930s models of a forgotten luxury and scale. There are also, less alluringly, car bodies employed as the basis for artefacts and assemblages, of which the most visually arresting is probably Scott Prescott's "Ghetto Blaster". In adjoining sections and galleries are varieties of painting, drawing and photography, all featuring or commenting upon the central role of the automobile in American life and imagination. There is everything from Claes Oldenburg's sketches for a gearstick sculpture (designed originally to supplant Nelson's column as the centrepiece of Trafalgar Square) to a 1326 woodcut from the school of Albrecht Dürer, which depicts a prototype juggernaut in the age of Maximilian I. Leonardo's design for a horseless carriage is also on show.

Wyndham Lewis, in his attack upon Marinetti's Futurism and defence of British Vorticism, described the Italian movement as "mere automobilism". There are signs of this heresy — cars for cars' sake — in the Los Angeles exhibition, which sometimes seems to celebrate the car in the manner of the famous Cadillac ranch at Amarillo. But an effort has

been made to show how art and industry have always combined in the United States. Diego Rivera's Ford Detroit frescoes are a good example, as is Chaplin's *Modern Times*. Dos Passos's *USA* or Edward Hopper's rural scenes in which cars take the place of hay-wains.

MOCA is less than a year old, and was a very long time in gestation. It was in 1980 that Pontus Hultén of the Pompidou (Beaubourg) Centre was gazetted as director, but not until last November did the Museum hold its first show. Unlike the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, MOCA was conceived of as part of the planned urban renewal of its parent city, and has enjoyed municipal and business patronage from the very start. The current exhibition, for example, has a tremendous array of commercial sponsors, many of whom are "spin-offs" from the promotional extravaganza of the Summer Olympics. Some critics allege that this is gelding modern art, making it into a commodity or a collector's item. And, since the cost of the whole project is some \$50 million, a heavy reliance on corporate money has indeed been necessary. There is something rather mercenary and depressing in the museum's self-description, which speaks of it as "a focal point for the major cultural/commercial/residential complex, the largest such undertaking ever offered to private developers by the City". But what the hell — downtown L.A. certainly needed a refit and this is, after all, California where, as the *Automobile and Culture* show demonstrates, modern art and advertising are often the very same thing. Or, as Pontus Hultén put it on his arrival from Paris, "I like Los Angeles very much. There is something about the spirit there, the way things are not worn down into tradition."

### San Francisco

Lawrence Ferlinghetti would probably, from a different perspective and as another ex-Parisian, agree. He has always opposed San Francisco's snobbery about its southern neighbour. "SF snobs look down at LA and say LA is Rome, we're Florence. But I think maybe San Francisco is more like Sparta." The café in North Beach where we are sitting over a capuccino does little to confirm either analogy; the City Lights bookstore is on the exact boundary street which separates the bohemian quarter from the sleazy red light district. Still, there was something like a San Francisco renaissance in the 1950s, and Ferlinghetti is perpetually optimistic about a successor to it. "I get the feeling that we're in a pregnant period", he says. "I define poetry as 'life perceived with passion' and there's no passion now. It's all too cool and well modulated; poetry about poetry."

Same in France and Italy. But perhaps there's *Howl* just waiting to be uttered."

He has a new volume of poems out this month from New Directions. *Over All the Obscene Boundaries* (I quite forgot to ask him why it is called that) is subtitled *European Poems and Translations*, and deals with topics as diverse as Pasolini's murder and the nuclear future. Several of the poems are in French — Ferlinghetti translated Jacques Prévert in his youth and admits to many borrowings and imitations from him. He would, he says, be most gratified to be compared to Apollinaire. Judging by the English poems here, it would be difficult to come up with that flattering verdict. There is a generally freehand, unpunctuated effect, as if they were all written to be read aloud (one of Ferlinghetti's favourite recreations). The punning "Expressionist History of German Expressionism" is an example ("Rot-luff painted his rusty lust . . .") and Kandinsky grew insanely incandescent").

Ferlinghetti is very conscious of his European roots, and was partly drawn to San Francisco because it reminded him (then) of the Mediterranean. He changed his name back from Ferling when he found out what his immigrant parents had done, and claims a possible blood connection, through his Portuguese Sephardic mother, with Camille Pissarro. And his ability in Latin languages has accidentally involved him with the drama in Central America. He has for years been close to Ernesto Cardenal, the ex-Trappist poet who is now Minister of Culture in the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Cardenal, a fellow New Directions poet and former pupil of Thomas Merton, has hosted both Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg on visits to the revolution. So, although it is customary to look on Ferlinghetti as a figure from a *passé* culture, I can report that he still, to himself, seems very contemporary.

## Museum books

### Michele Field

Not long ago, British art galleries, museums and libraries had quiet "publication departments", where monographs were printed in small editions, exchanged between like-minded scholars or sold at normal prices. Now the arcane these departments used to publish books on subjects remote from general readers, so brief that their narrow spines disappear on a bookseller's shelves, risk extinction.

The change came with the Thatcher Government's principle of devolution, which encouraged museums, galleries and libraries to look to themselves for some of their revenue. Since April these institutions have for the first time been able to keep the money they make from admission charges and merchandise. Publications departments, once run exclusively as a public service, were urged to reconsider their priorities. In the process scholarly monographs began to depend upon profits made from glossy exhibition catalogues, posters and souvenirs. It is a great problem for museum and galleries because the mixed economy is so very mixed.

This is the same argument that trade publishers use: poets and unconventional writers are beholden to bestsellers, whose profitability sustains the loss-makers. Most museums, galleries and libraries say they have "not yet" had to drop a publication which in a scholarly sense was worth publishing. But they admit that if they don't publish these books, no one else will.

The publishers are usually run either as independent businesses within their institutions or, like British Museum Publications and probably the Victoria and Albert Museum next year, they have become registered trading companies wholly owned by the trustees. This means that as publishers they are circumvented not only in their choice of titles, which are subject to approval by the trustees as well as by the institution's keepers and curators, but also in their business decisions. The Tate Gallery's 44,000 catalogues of the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition, for example, were published and sold in the trade by Penguin; not the Tate, because the show's commercial sponsor was Pearsons, of which Penguin is a subsidiary.

# Letters

## 'Islam in the World'

Sir, — H. El-Essawy of the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance in the UK, in his letter to you (September 28) about my review of Malise Ruthven's *Islam in the World*, has accused me of "intellectual terrorism". This is such a serious charge that I feel bound to reply, at least in respect of the point which apparently upset him most.

This point was to do with orthopraxis in Sunni Islam — the spelling out of what may and may not be done in every conceivable situation. One of the examples given by Ruthven was robustly appropriate: "the ritual ablutions required after legitimate sexual intercourse in marriage may be dispensed with after unnatural acts with animals, corpses or 'such children as are not normally susceptible to penetration'" (Ruthven, p 164). In other words, orthopraxis in respect of the important Muslim concern with ritual purity is laid down as fully as possible; and this example would seem to represent a most commendable attempt, in Sunni Islamic terms, to cover every last possible question arising in connection with the matter of abtution. Mr El-Essawy apparently sees it rather differently: for him it is a "wicked quotation", the source of which "certainly was not the Qur'an, nor any other Islamic source book, whose business is righteousness, not obscenity". I agree entirely with him that the business of the Quran and other Islamic source books is righteousness (or right practice); but I must beg to differ when it comes to the example.

The source of the example is highly respectable: it is none other than an authoritative compendium of Islamic law compiled in India in the seventeenth century by a board of distinguished religious scholars and known both as *al-Fatwa al-'Alamiyya* and as *al-Fatwa al-Hindiyah*. If Mr El-Essawy looks at Ruthven's book, he will see that Ruthven came to know of the example by way of *La sexualité en Islam* (Paris 1975) p 66 (not p 67, as Ruthven says) by the Tunisian (and Muslim) scholar Abdelwahab Bouhdiba. Actually, I am not entirely happy with Bouhdiba's rendering: he fails to indicate that the child in question is a young female child (*qahira*), and he does not point out that the abtution may be dispensed with only if ejaculation has not taken place; but this is perhaps not the place for dwelling on such infelicities.

MARTIN HINDS.  
Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

## 'H. G. Wells: Aspects of a Life'

Sir, — Reviewing Anthony West's *H. G. Wells: Aspects of a Life*, Philip Larkin (September 28) notes the obsessiveness in the undermining of Rebecca West. He scarcely mentions, though, the persistent detraction of other figures in Wells's life — particularly George Gissing, whom West presents as a lying, syphilitic egotist, pathologically secretive and compulsively confessional, who deceived his friends and beat his wives. It seems odd to lavish so much disgust on the "darker secrets" of Gissing's life — his marriage to a prostitute, the college thefts — when they saw the light years ago. More objectionable is that this moralistic picture is embroidered into distortion. Take West's fourth-hand version (his account of Gissing's account of Gissing's dealings with his second wife, Edith. Where checkable, this contradicts original documents, especially Gissing's diary. On a single page we learn that before going to Italy in 1897 Gissing got Edith's son Walter away from her by a trick and made off without further communication; that, back in England, he had Walter "boarded out elsewhere", then misled Edith about the boy's whereabouts, thus causing her to pay a fruitless visit to Gissing's brother in Worcester-shire; and that this drove her, on returning "perplexed and exhausted" to her London lodgings; to quarrel with her landlady. West's account is impossible, even on chronological grounds. Walter was not "boarded out" after Gissing's return in 1898: he was lodged at Wakefield, with Gissing's relatives, before the trip. In 1897, Edith's visit to Gissing's brother was in June 1898; her "row with her landlady" — attracting her with a stick — didn't follow

immediately on her return, but in August 1898. The alleged lack of communication, and the "trick" to get Walter away, are both refuted by Gissing's diary (August 27 and September 6, 1897). These comments don't unpick all the errors contained on a single page; they do perhaps indicate West's attempts to stitch up the evidence.

West's account of Gissing's first wife, Nell (or Mary Ann, as he misnames her), is also threaded with distortions — most mischievously when Gissing's compassionate description of her death-bed is attributed, in order to discredit Gissing, to Morley Roberts, who didn't see her. No one should trust what West says about Gissing. Why he distorts the truth like this is perhaps the most interesting question. My own view — backed here by his emphasis on Gissing's neglect of his two sons — is that West's concern with problematic parents is often projected on to other people. That, however, is merely conjecture; the injustice to Gissing is not.

DAVID GRYLLE.  
47 Barrington Road, London N8 8QT.

Sir, — In his *H. G. Wells: Aspects of a Life* (reviewed in the *TLS* of September 28) Anthony West records that Wells wanted someone to deliver an oration at his wife's funeral (p 120). "My father's choice", he says, "had fallen on a man called Page, who was known to have had a full and mellow voice, but who had no other claim to distinction, and had played no part at all in Jane's life or his own."

To apprehend the ignorance behind this contemptuous remark the reader may care to consult my memoir of T. E. Page, CH, MA, Litt D (Bristol Classical Press, 1982), or, if that reference sounds suspect, to look at Sir Frank Fletcher's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1931–40, pp 665–6.

NIALL RUDD.  
11 Woodland Road, Bristol.

## Plato and Lesbianism

Sir, — Alan Sheridan's letter (October 5) might be taken to claim that Plato nowhere mentions lesbianism. In fact there is just one passage in which he does. In the myth told by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*, each person is one half of an original whole that was split by Zeus because of the arrogance of the human race. Each whole was of one of three sexes, all male, hermaphrodite, or all female. Each person seeks his or her other half, and "women who are halves of a female whole direct their affections towards women and pay little attention to men; lesbians belong to this category" (191e2–5).

According to Sir Kenneth Dover in his edition of the *Symposium* (p 118), "This is the only surviving passage from classical Attic literature which acknowledges the existence of female homosexuality", but it is significant, because Aristophanes, more than any other speaker in the *Symposium*, seems to reflect popular attitudes.

J. E. J. ALTHAM.  
Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

## Orwell in Yugoslavia

Sir, — George Theiner's article (September 7) on the exhibition of Orwell's works in the languages of Eastern Europe was very interesting and instructive. As a translator of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* I have often wondered: What is the company like, who and where are the others, struggling over Newspeak, and what are the results? And at many lectures and panel discussions I have often been asked: "Where else in Eastern Europe is Orwell officially known and published?" I supposed Yugoslavia was the only place where Orwell's books were safely available, but I was not absolutely certain until I read Theiner's article.

Still, I feel obliged to add some additional information — to Theiner's report, of course, as I have not seen the British Library exhibition. It is true that Orwell's Collected Works were published last year in Serbo-Croat, as well as an edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Slovenian this year, but Orwell has a far richer and longer past than that. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the Slovenian language first appeared in 1967 (in my translation); was reprinted last

year and again this year. The first Serbo-Croat translation of the same book was published in 1968 in Belgrade and was reprinted many times. At the moment so many editions are available that it is quite difficult to keep track of them. Four years ago it was translated into Albanian, appearing in Pristina (the Yugoslav province of Kosovo), not Albania.

Other works by George Orwell have a similar history, the most popular, of course, being *Animal Farm*. The Yugoslav Orwelliana includes everything imaginable — badges, posters, postcards, paraphrases, at least two dramatizations (of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*) and even a non-stop public reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by an actor who was crazy enough to undertake the impossible.

ALENKA PUHAR.  
Malejeva 23, 61000 Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

## Throat and Zitidar

Sir, — Eric Korn, discussing the First Pan-Chronic Interlactic [Book] Fair (September 14), mentions a throat-drawn sledge. The throat (almost invariably prefixed by the adjective "squealing") is a riding animal. The draught animal of Barsom is a zitidar.

D. M. BAILEY.  
74 Ferme Park Road, London N8.

## Plays on File

Sir, — Do your readers know that, although all the licensed copies of plays performed in Britain before 1968 are now on file at the British Library, the reader reports and any correspondence relating to those plays is still held by the Office of the Lord Chamberlain? Furthermore, the Lord Chamberlain, as an official of the Royal Household, is not obligated to allow any scholar to study any of those documents, and, as of this summer when I was in London, has no intention whatsoever of releasing those papers in the future! This high-handedness can create ridiculous situations.

I was writing the introduction to a comedy by Dorothy L. Sayers, called *Love All*, which will soon be published for the first time. It had been performed briefly by a London arts club in 1940, then "disappeared", only to "reappear" forty years later in typescript among her papers. After determining that the licensed copy was in the British Library, I went to examine it, and found it to be a messy, coffee-stained work copy, clearly used in a production. It had stage directions, audio cues, etc. In spite of access to Sayers's correspondence held by Mr Anthony Fleming, it was not possible to determine exactly why the play arrived at the Lord Chamberlain's in such a state, not to mention the question of possible other performances of which there is no other record. The staff at the British Library were helpfulness itself, but they could not get the related materials from the Lord Chamberlain.

I wrote to him myself and in reply was sent copies of two letters from the play file which gave some more clues, but I was not allowed to see the reader report, which must explain why some lines were cut (chiefly jokes about Christianity and homosexuality).

I submit that all such information should be readily available to those like me with a legitimate need to see it, not locked up in the Royal Household for ever.

ALZINA STONE DALE.  
5548 S Kenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

## Bottom Line

Sir, — I found the September 28 edition of your paper most

Perhaps it was the early edition and you had no time to

On the other hand, it might have been on purpose, and you wanted to leave something to the

But please do not do it too

P. J. KAVANAGH.  
Sparrowthorn, Elkstone, Nr Cheltenham, Glos GL53 9PX.

From today, the cover price of the *TLS* rises to 70p.

## Basil Blackwell

## The Making of a Moonie

Brainwashing or Choice?  
EILEEN BARKER

The Moonies inspire fear and anxiety; stories of brainwashing, extraordinary rituals and phenomenal wealth abound. Eileen Barker here investigates them from the inside — she is the first non-Moonie to gain such privileged access — and gives a frank and hard-hitting account of why they join, who they are and why they act as they do.

320 pages, £12.00 (0 631 13246 5)

## Strange Gifts?

A Guide to Charismatic Renewal  
Edited by DAVID MARTIN  
and PETER MULLEN

The charismatic movement has created a sensation in the churches in the last fifteen years. *Strange Gifts?* is an examination of its nature and influence and includes contributors from the whole spectrum of opinion offering analysis and interpretation.

240 pages, hardback £15.00 (0 631 13397 7)  
paperback £5.95 (0 631 13992 8)

## Persecution and Toleration

Edited by W.J. SHEILS

The two experiences of persecution and toleration can be used to sum up the history of the Christian church and its relations with other religions. This volume examines these experiences in Christian history, and shows that Christians remain the victims of persecution by unsympathetic regimes, in an age of interdenominational toleration.

*Studies in Church History, Volume 21*  
500 pages, £25.00 (0 631 13601 0)

## The Education of the Young Child

Second edition, completely revised  
and updated  
Edited by DAVID FONTANA

This book describes in straightforward language the main theoretical and practical aspects of nursery and infant school education. The second edition has been revised throughout to take account of recent work, and new chapters added on cognitive development, assessment and parent-school relationships.

320 pages, hardback £22.50 (0 631 13584 7)  
paperback £7.50 (0 631 13585 5)

## The Economics of Information

KENNETH ARROW

The question of information in economics is closely akin to that of uncertainty, and is a field in which Kenneth Arrow has been in the forefront for thirty years. He has made contributions to our understanding of decision theory, game theory, insurance, risk and resource allocation, and the demand for information.

294 pages, £25.00 (0 631 13737 8)

## Individual Choice under Certainty and Uncertainty

KENNETH ARROW

Professor Arrow has a habit of turning his attention to a new field of inquiry only to redefine the basic terms of reference and move the discussion to a higher level almost immediately. This is what he has done for the subject of individual choice under certainty and uncertainty, producing a classic series of articles.

264 pages, £25.00 (0 631 13736 X)

## The periodicals, 24: London Magazine

### Brian Morton

ALAN ROSS (Editor)  
*London Magazine*  
New series, volume 24, nos 5 and 6: August/September 1984  
Subscription, £12.50 (£28) per annum, from 30 Thurloe Place, London SW7

When the *London Magazine* re-appeared in 1954 (the original *LM*, under John Scott, emerged in 1820, first of the new style miscellanies south of the border) it received a rumbling send-off from T. S. Eliot, who set out the new magazine's aims: to publish work by new or little-known writers, to offer critical evaluation of established living figures and to cultivate an international flavour.

Thirty years on, and now under Alan Ross's editorship, the *London Magazine* has made a more than adequate approach to all three. Its record in publishing new writers is superb — all the more so now at a time when literary magazines, even the outwardly zipper *Granta*, seem content with safer bets — and it remains one of the most eclectic and far-ranging monthlies in Britain. Its cosmopolitanism belies the title. Ross has always been strongly aware of the hinterland, publishing regular profiles and surveys such as Andy Croft's valuable account of the "Birmingham Group" last year.

There is little theory in *London Magazine*, and less ideology, beyond a just-discernible

revisionism about Britain's imperial role and a vague flavour of nostalgia and pessimism, usually belied by the new fiction and poetry it publishes. It not popular in the usual sense, it still palpably seeks a wide audience. It is perhaps the most physically attractive of literary magazines, robust and well-bound, with a large type-face, and generously illustrated on the cover and within. Indeed, an interest in the visual arts has been a strong feature of the magazine recently. Over the last year Ross has presented, in addition to the usual reports and notices, four instalments from the journals of the abstract painter Keith Vaughan, entries leading to the actual moment of his death.

The double helping of fiction in the summer issue has a uniform sobriety. Anne Spillard's "The Peacock Feather" may owe too much to Lawrence to be entirely successful but Peter Gilpin's "The Alarmist" is a remarkable *tour-de-force*. Kevin McGrath's "Cross-country race" is a Billie Holiday piece with little outward substance but (like its hero): great staying power.

The habit of publishing long, personally-focused review essays on recent books has given rise to Robert Liddell on his two friends Barbara Pym and Ivy Compton-Burnett, and Jo Grimond on "The Cobbett Tradition" — a piece to set alongside Julian Symonds's study of political compromise and defeat, the "imaginary memoir" of "George Boy" in the July issue. As before, the most immediately arresting fea-

ture in the current double number is the pictorial supplement, Robert McNab's "Golden Age", seven hazy wartime studies of "distant and lonely locations, peopled by the colonial elite . . . moments lost, forgotten faces; the earthenware skeletons of the past". *London Magazine*, in so far as it has a retrievable "line", seems intent on recovering a past (one no less distinctively English for being so cosmopolitan) that is felt to be in danger of being submerged by a runaway present; yet it manages to focus its backward glance without a hint of reaction.

The magazine's immediate concern and the main source of controversy these days is the problem of funding. Thirty years ago (when Daily Mirror Newspapers footed the bills) Eliot warned of the double bind that dictated: this magazine lacks support, therefore there is no point in my supporting it; and simultaneously: this magazine is substantially backed and so can do without my support. Backing these days comes from the Arts Council. Critics argue that the magazine should be expected to stand on its own feet. Eliot had argued that subscription would represent not just financial but also moral support and ideally the magazine should be able to cover itself through the subscription and advertising. In the absence of that (no surprise in these times), and whatever the precise pros and cons of the Arts Council argument, *London Magazine* is well worth its keep, too good by far to lose.



## COMMENTARY

## The ideal of public woman

A. S. Byatt

The Bostonians  
Curzon Cinema

The *Bostonians* was to be Henry James's "very American tale". He asked himself "what was the most salient and peculiar point in our social life" and answered "the situation of women, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf". The *Bostonians* is dense with the detail of the social life of the world in which James grew up, educated by his Swedenborgian and Fourierist father, a world alive with ideas and isms: spiritualism, mesmerism, Utopian communisms, feminism. When T. S. Eliot wrote that James had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it, he was not mocking, as is often supposed. He was approving James's resistance to the swarming beliefs and causes of his time. James's scepticism about the feminists is liable to disgust modern students and may do so even in this gravely beautiful and narrowly passionate Merchant-Ivory film. That would be a pity. The novel is complicated and arguably one of the greatest written in English: the film is a very considerable achievement.

The key phrase is "the decline of the sentiment of sex". For the elder James the separation and union of the sexes was a primary image of the nature of the universe. His son's novel is a sceptical dramatization of an attempt to deny this "natural" order. The essence of the plot of *The Bostonians* is the battle for the soul of the beautiful "inspired" Verena Tarrant (daughter of a mesmerist and spiritual healer) between Olive Chancellor, spinster Bostonian aristocrat, and Basil Ransom, her down-at-heel cousin from Mississippi, a Southern gentleman. It is a battle between the "personal" (with overtones of the integrity of the personality) and the "public" (with overtones of disagreeing and opposing public and private).

## Making the language work

Stanley Wells

Playing Shakespeare  
Channel Four  
JOHN BARTON  
Playing Shakespeare  
211pp. Methuen. £9.95 (paperback, £4.95).  
0431 547809

In a foreword to the book *Playing Shakespeare* Trevor Nunn, besides writing vividly and affectionately of John Barton, defines a "method and principle of an approach to acting Shakespeare which has been fundamental to the Royal Shakespeare Company since it was formed". This approach attempts both "to serve the complexities and contradictions of the text" and "to make the language work, and to be alive and exciting in the theatre". The definition describes too the strengths and some limitations of the nine television programmes shown on Channel Four and of the book based on them. The topic is very much the language and its vocal projection: there is little concern with other aspects of "playing", such as gesture, facial expression, make-up, movement, position relative to other actors; and only late in the book, in a programme that has not been screened, does John Barton talk about costumes and sets. A reader who had seen none of his productions might almost be forgiven for assuming that he worked mainly for radio.

Nevertheless, what most distinguishes Shakespeare from other writers is the richness of his prose and verse: to concentrate on the problems of realizing his language is to approach the heart of the uniquely Shakespearean experience. And the topic is laid out with admirable clarity. Each programme (or chapter) concentrates on a particular aspect first, what Barton calls "Objective Things" – such as acting styles and problems posed by set speeches and soliloquies; second, "Subjective Things" – such as irony and ambiguity, passion and coolness, and exploration of character. Barton is present throughout as ex-

and money). Olive believes in Verena as a feminist public speaker. Basil, writing unfashionably and unsuccessfully against democracy – he reads Carlyle and de Tocqueville – does not. Christopher Reeve plays Basil with exactly the right combination of easy sensual insistence, gentlemanly courtesy and single or simple-minded determination to cause Verena to flower in a private life with him. Vanessa Redgrave's Olive is magnificently conceived, both in moments of gawky and desperately gentle tenderness with Verena and in the compressed agony of her social appearances – above all at Mrs Burrage's New York soirée where Verena speaks to an enraptured audience and Olive is tortured by fear of losing her, pride in her "gift", contempt for and fear of her hostess and Basil Ransom. Madeleine Potter as Verena looks a little too ordinarily pretty, not strange or distant enough, but acts with a kind of sexual intelligence and dignity, in her scenes with both male and female lover, which is impressive.

The film must centre on this triangle. It must also render Olive more sympathetic, dramatized and separate, than James does, who shows some animus against her even while recording her pain in detail. He indulged in an unusually pointed mockery of most of his characters, particularly in the earlier chapters of the book, where the battling women are caricatured with a chilly ferocity. Partly under pressure from William James he toned this down, and the aged Miss Birdseye of the film (Jessica Tandy) and the austere humorous little woman doctor Prance (Linda Hunt) are seen with the affection of his later vision. I waited in vain in the excellently comic scene between Ransom and the purlind and wholly charitable-minded Miss Birdseye (here set in a public library) for her to utter her absurd and moving line: "Do you regard us then, simply as lovely baubles?" Ruth Praver Jhabvala's script, nevertheless, as always, does marvels in constructing and preserving the text and its texture.

positor, commentator, and director of the varying groups of actors who take part in each programme. Tall, plumpening, moving with a bear-like shamble, wearing an everlasting cardigan and a perpetual tie, he addresses both viewers and actors with amiable eagerness. Clearly he is a born teacher.

In the television version, he has two sets of pupils: the viewers, who may be assumed to be relatively unaware of the backstage business of putting on a play, and the actors with whom he discusses selected passages, and who perform the illustrations. There are several points of artificiality about the set-up. It takes place in a mock-up of a rehearsal room; a central acting area, surrounded by a carefully assembled litter of tables, chairs, props, banners and coffee cups. Actors, dressed informally, hang around the edge of the playing space when they are not performing. Cameras and cameramen are undisguised. Generally, the programmes are scripted. Some actors – notably David Suchet – are good at acting spontaneity; others – notably Donald Sinden – appear actually to achieve it; but sometimes we are over-aware that answers to questions have been set up beforehand.

The medium imposes problems of scale. Actors rehearse as for the stage, but they act to the camera, sometimes in close-up. Thus, Alan Howard and Michael Pennington speak soliloquies of Henry VI and Hamlet with moving intimacy but in a manner that would have to be greatly adjusted in a theatre. And there are problems of credibility. Most of the performers are re-enacting roles that they know intimately and in which Barton himself rehearsed them for their stage performances. Indeed, it is a pleasure of the series that we can encounter again snatches from some of the RSC's most greatly admired productions: Peggy Ashcroft as Queen Margaret (still lapsing) and the Countess; Judi Dench and Richard Pasco in *Twelfth Night*; Patrick Stewart as Shylock. But it is hard to believe that they are studying their roles from the ground upwards, even if one looks on the sessions as a series of master-classes.



"Aphrodite" by Henry Holiday from Beauty's Awakening: An exhibition to celebrate a century of the Art Workers Guild at Brighton Museum.

And both novel and film leave us with the image of the detached, the unfeminine, the dignified and useful Dr Prance, rather than the agitators, as the ideal of public woman. But she can afford to be simply public, having no "sentiment of sex".

The film works too at the mythic level on which Basil Ransom, with his symbolic name, is either the redeemer (Love) rescuing the soul (Verena) from the doom of the Old Testament (Olive Chancellor, the Law) or alternatively

gloomy Dis, snatching the Spring away from Demeter to live in his underworld. Christopher Reeve is always a black and threatening figure in the landscapes. The scenes, filmed in Martha's Vineyard, where the distraught Olive runs up and down the shore in the growing dark, seeking the girl who had promised to go to Ransom for only ten minutes, are both visually beautiful, and chilling images of a world from which the light is receding, really and symbolically. The seasons move from spring to winter as Olive's love flourishes and is destroyed. The gloom of the Boston Music Hall from which Ransom snatches his bride/prey, hooded in black, is grandly comic, and something more. "Why, Verena," says Miss Birdseye, as Verena brushes her brow, after having kissed Ransom, "how cold your lips are." It is the touch of approaching death. Film and novel are profoundly ambivalent about the gains and losses of Verena's entry, in tears, into that "unknown far from brilliant".

There is a pun here too about the State of the Union after the Civil War. The film places this historically with great economy, making its points with martial music for Basil, "My Country 'tis of Thee", fireworks of Stars and Stripes on the Glorious Fourth, and the awkward emotions of Basil's visit to the Harvard memorial for his youthful dead. It offers us, with Walter Lassally's camera, Boston, lovely and austere, with its uncompromising dark verticals, deep creamy colours, soft red brick, a decorum tinged with the decay and madness of the world from which Verena came, the world of "wizards, wizards and mediums, Spirit-rappers and roaring radicals". Perhaps in the end, despite all the real, close passion, this film is almost too lingeringly beautiful, too preserved. There is something in the prose, the solidity of specification of this one novel of James's, which derives from the swarming hallucinatory world of Dickens or the discomposed vision of Baz Luhrmann. The film has a classical quality: the novel, in the most positive sense, grotesque.

Readers have an advantage over viewers in some respects. The programmes have been tidied up for the book, some are rearranged in the interests of clarity (which makes for difficulties in trying to follow the programmes with the book), points are expanded, and three entire programmes which have not been shown are printed; they include an excellent discussion between John Barton and Ian McKellen called "Contemporary Shakespeare" which broadens the topic into matters affecting the director rather than the actor.

Concluding the Shylock programme, John Barton remarks "I always feel that though the

conception of a production may be mine, the actual performance is something that in a deep sense no longer really belongs to me." For better or for worse, the actor's art is inextricably entangled with every detail of his being: a point that was forcibly made by Barton's production of *Richard II*, in which Ian Richardson and Richard Pasco alternated the roles of Richard and Bolingbroke. It is a strength of John Barton's direction, as revealed here, that he acts as a catalyst to each actor's individual qualities. Viewers may receive a stronger intuitive sense of those qualities, but readers will find them literally expounded.

## AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 195

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send up the answers so that they reach this office not later than November 2. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author 195" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on November 9.

1 Item a capon . . . 2s. 2d.  
Item sauce . . . 4d.  
Item sack two gallons . . . 5s. 8d.  
Item anchovies and jack after supper . . . 2s. 6d.  
Item bread . . . 10b.

2 You could buy things worth having for a farthing in those days. Most sweets were lost ounces a penny, and there was even some stuff called Paradise Mixture, mostly broken sweets from other bottles which was six. Then there were Farthing Everlastings, which were a yard long and couldn't be finished inside half an hour.

3 "Can I have my change please?"  
"Change?"  
"Yes, change. Can I have it please?"  
"Five shillings you give me."  
"Yes. The bill was four shillings. I want a shilling back."

"Wasn't that for my tip?"  
"It might have been, but it isn't now. Give it to me."  
"The whole shilling?"  
"Yes. All of it. Now. Give it to me."  
The waiter made no attempt to produce any money. In this half-choked voice he said: "Most people give me a tip."

Competition No 191

Winner: Sarah Gearhart

Answers:

1 The moon in the bureau mirror took about a million miles (and perhaps with pride, at herself, but she never, never smiles) far and away beyond sleep, or perhaps she's a daytime sleeper.  
Elizabeth Bishop, "Insomnia"

2 To gravity attentive, she can notice nothing here, though we – Whom hunger does not move From gardens where we feel secure Look up and with a sigh endure The tyrannies of love.  
W. H. Auden, "A Summer Night"

3 But while the moon is rounding towards the full He follows whatever whim's most difficult Among whims not impossible, and though scorned As with the cat-o'-nine-tails of the mind, His body moulded from within his body Grows compeller.  
W. B. Yeats, "The Phases of the Moon"

## The struggle for mastery

John Deathridge

RICHARD WAGNER  
Tannhäuser  
Royal Opera House

"Wagner has finished another opera", Schumann wrote to Mendelssohn on October 22, 1845. "But it lacks pure harmony and skilful four-part writing . . . and now he wants changes and cuts – too late!" After seeing *Tannhäuser* on stage Schumann wrote to Mendelssohn again three weeks later that he had changed his mind. "I was quite touched by many things", he confessed.

Schumann's volte-face had some prophetic ingredients. Wagner not only demanded changes and cuts after the première of *Tannhäuser* on October 19, 1845, he carried them out immediately and continued to make more of them for the next thirty years. His later remarks on the opera invariably imply that it was "too late" to create the perfect version, let alone the perfect performance of it (an unsurprising streak of fatalism considering the other back-breaking projects that preoccupied him). Schumann's initial objections were those of a musical purist unsoiled by the realities of the theatre, as he himself recognized. Yet Wagner's critique of his own opera had profound echoes. When he wrote to Mathilde Wesendonck in April 1860 that "mastery" had eluded him when composing *Tannhäuser* it was a remark prompted by high musical ambition, despite his dramaturgical justification of it. (The Venusberg music, he told her, was lacklustre

and therefore without the power to give the ensuing tragedy sufficient weight.)

Schumann's affection for *Tannhäuser* was shared by large sections of the musical public in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the opera's popularity was so great, and its overture so famous, that any attempt to change it seemed doomed from the outset. After the first performance Wagner drastically reduced the orchestral introduction to Act 3, only to be besieged by members of the orchestra demanding its reinstatement. (The version played today is a compromise.) For the Paris performances of 1861 he decided to make a large cut in the overture and to let it run straight into the opening bacchanal. But Paris refused to be deprived of the piece it knew best and insisted on hearing all of it. In addition Wagner deliberately set out to "astonish" the Parisians with a new orchestral *pièce de résistance* for the bacchanal (even the bass tuba has a virtuoso part aptly described by Richard Strauss as "an expression of animal-like sensuality"), and he enriched Venus's *paradis artificiel* with an extraordinary stylistic mosaic in which gorgeous *Tristan*-like sounds are stitched onto stiffer, four-square phrases written sixteen or seventeen years earlier. Yet this ambitious display of musical pyrotechnics found little sympathy in the day-to-day operatic routine of German opera houses already familiar with the older version. For this reason Albert Niemann, who had made a terrific reputation as *Tannhäuser* in Germany, adamantly refused in Paris to comply with Wagner's alterations to the song contest in Act 2. It was too late: the opera's quasi-religious utopianism and the vulnerable

operatic form it required were already tainted with the deconsecrated odour and immovable strength of a public institution.

It would be churlish to say that the opening night of Covent Garden's new *Tannhäuser* was little better than an average performance in a provincial German opera house. Certainly, the orchestra sounded under-rehearsed and so did the pilgrims' choruses. Eva Randová, singing Venus for the first time in England, made nonsense of the part with an unbearably plummy tone and hardly a single consonant. Colin Davis's conducting was disappointingly uneven and only really sprang to life for the big tune or exciting stretto. Timothy O'Brien's scenery and Nick Chelton's lighting showed the exotisms of the Venusberg in dull hues and allowed the more sombre world of the Hall of Song to glow in rich colours so that the latter at times seemed more erotic than the former. And Covent Garden has decided inexplicably to shorten the overture (as Wagner wanted it in Paris) while retaining the earlier Dresden version of the bacchanal and Venus scenes. Thus the audience is deprived of both the magnificent coda of the original overture and the ambitious musical *avant-gardisme* with which Wagner wanted to impress the Parisians.

Yet for all this the production is definitely worth seeing. If the musical side comes perilously close to bland operatic routine, the producer Elijah Moshinsky has at least lavished some care on this awkward and fascinating work that just saves it from disaster. There are weak moments, the worst of which is the insipid ballet in the Venusberg. But elsewhere there are good ideas, especially in Moshinsky's interpretation of Elisabeth, strongly played and sung by Gwyneth Jones. Wagner claimed that if Act 3 were to make sense an emphatic delivery of *Tannhäuser*'s words "Zum Heil den Sünder zu führen" towards the end of Act 2 should be allowed to shift the focus of attention

from Elisabeth to *Tannhäuser*. Bravely, Moshinsky has disregarded this and kept Elisabeth to the fore, allowing her to be seen kneeling on stage even before Act 3 begins, a position she retains with visible emotional involvement throughout the orchestral introduction. As a rule this piece of pure programme music only makes sense *a posteriori* when much of it is repeated in *Tannhäuser*'s Rome Narration. The daring tautology rarely works in practice, as Wagner often admitted. Yet in Moshinsky's production it does, largely because the music is first heard as an expression of Elisabeth's feelings. Not only does it carry her through the difficult prayer in Act 3, the ensuing confrontation between *Tannhäuser* and Wolfram is also heightened by a double perspective which shows that the sensual pain of *Tannhäuser*'s Rome Narration is Elisabeth's too – an interpretation uncomfortably close to the aesthetics of *Tristan* perhaps, but undeniably effective in the theatre.

Any staging of *Tannhäuser* inevitably raises the question of whether it can be produced convincingly at all. Wagner himself believed that a production must stand or fall by the acting and vocal ability of the protagonist. Moshinsky's *Tannhäuser* on the opening night was Klaus König, an East German *Heldenknecht* whose efficient and unexciting performance only succeeded in casting doubt on Wagner's opinion. As Schumann suspected, the real trouble is that the music of *Tannhäuser* is dangerously uneven and needs love and affection in the theatre to coax it into life. The only artists who seemed to understand this (apart from Moshinsky) were Gwyneth Jones and Thomas Allen as Wolfram. Both gave deeply felt performances that banished thoughts of "pure harmony" and "skilful four-part writing" (or rather the luck of them) and allowed us to glimpse the vitality and dramatic genius this flawed masterpiece still contains.

## NEW FROM CARCANET

## introducing the Carcanet Collection

The Rash Act  
FORD MADDOX FORD

"The *Rash Act* ought to be bought and read by all interested in the novel as an art form . . . the death of morality and responsibility – a forbidding theme, but in the paradox of art, it is made to serve a tapestry of rich colour and glistening vivacity." Anthony Burgess, *Observer*.  
"There is no novelist of this century more likely to live than Ford Maddox Ford" *Graeme Green*.

ISBN 0 85635 529 1 £3.95 paperback

Park: a fantastic story  
JOHN GRAY

Edited by Phillip Healey

"When in the year 2000 the neglected masterpieces of the past century are finally assembled, among them will be *Park* John Gray's 'fantastic story', a short and dreamlike novel in which the hero, Dr Mungo Park, dies and reawakes and seems to find himself in a future inhabited by a new race of black Catholics who are technically tremendously sophisticated, while the rodent-like descendants of degenerate white Englishmen live underground in wonderfully excavated caverns." Fiona MacCarthy, *The Times*.

ISBN 0 85635 538 0 £3.50 paperback

Fortnight's Anger  
ROGER SCRUTON

"That this is a first novel seems to me truly remarkable. It isn't surprising that the characters express themselves with an utterly convincing intelligence; or that there are numberless witty and felicitous 'allusions' throughout. But it is an uncommon accomplishment for a novelist to create such painfully living, breathing, joking-suffering persons. . . . The texture of *Fortnight's Anger* is wonderful: it reads like a kind of tactile palimpsest: provocative and mysterious insights, observations, quirks, notions, theories, thrown off with admirable ease." Joyce Carol Oates.

ISBN 0 85635 532 1 £3.50 paperback

Christopher Homm: a novel  
C. H. SISSON

"C. H. Sisson's extraordinary novel *Christopher Homm* is told backwards. It starts with the death of its hero. . . . It ends with his birth. In between in chapters that read like nails being picked out of a coffin, we are given the chronicle of the corruption of one ordinary man. . . . Certainly no one who cares about good writing can afford to ignore this book." Robert Nye, *Guardian*.

ISBN 0 85635 567 4 £3.50 paperback

## CARCANET PRESS LIMITED

208-212 Corn Exchange, Manchester M4 3BQ

Write for our catalogue (ref TL11)



# The spying business

Zara Steiner

CHRISTOPHER ANDREW and DAVID DILKS (Editors)

*The Missing Dimension: Governments and intelligence communities in the twentieth century*

300pp. Macmillan. £16.95.

0333 368649

CHRISTOPHER DOBSON and RONALD PAYNE  
*The Dictionary of Espionage*

234pp. Harrap. £9.95.

0245 542019

Is it not just a "great game"? Brought up in a tradition of best-selling spy stories extending from the fantasies of William Le Queux to the triumphs of James Bond and the more sombre world of Smiley's friends, readers of today's revelations about moles and Mata Hari might well be excused for confusing fiction and fact. Nor, in a world of spy satellites, is it surprising that sceptics ask whether agents and counter-agents are really necessary and whether we should not know more about what is being done in our name and with our money. *The Missing Dimension*, consisting of a humorous but wide-ranging and hard-hitting preface and eleven articles, illustrates the erratic and even farcical evolution of our modern "intelligence communities" and points up the unresolved paradoxes created by their growth and professionalization in democratic societies. The collection is not a contribution to the traditional school of fantasy; all but one of the pieces — Robert Cecil's refreshing treatment of the "Cambridge Comintern", based on personal experience — rest primarily on documentary sources.

The editors clearly wish to stress the historical importance of their subject and the academic respectability of their enquiries. For despite the elements of comedy and sport, and a tradition of gentlemen and players fast vanishing from the present scene, intelligence services have provided information in war and peace.

Christopher Andrew, whose pioneering work on the Cambridge spies will appear in 1985, surveys the development of cryptanalysis in the 1920s by comparing the pre-1914 French experience with subsequent British and American advances. In all three cases, inter-bureaucratic rivalry and the inability of governments to handle the new intelligence sources delayed the emergence of professional departments. Despite impressive French cryptographic successes against Britain and Germany, fierce rivalry between the "cabinets noirs" of the Quai d'Orsay and the Sûreté, and indiscretions on the part of the French Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in 1911, prompted the Germans successfully to change their codes. Britain and the United States only re-entered the race during the Great War. The former remained in a state of "cryptographic innocence" from 1844 until the wartime activities of Captain "Blinker" Hall and Room 40 at the Admiralty (of Zimmerman Telegram fame) and the War Office MT-13 re-established British code-breaking. American cryptanalysis owed its unlikely origins to

present prospect of an official peacetime history. Some of the intelligence supplied to government departments has been released to the Public Record Office, but practice is erratic. Papers cited by Hinsley cannot be found; the late Stephen Roskill claimed that documents previously seen had been removed from their files. Admittedly the main British intelligence effort well into the 1930s was directed against the Soviet Union but this can hardly be embarrassing today. Is it a reflection of traditional views still held by some that spying is an unwholesome business and "un-British", acceptable in war but not in peacetime? Or is it, despite contemporary disclosures, a by-product of an excessive concern for secrecy on the part of successive governments? The same misplaced and misplaced caution that until recently prevented the publication of the names of the heads of SIS, or that postponed government action over the GCHQ union membership question because of an unwillingness to admit publicly that GCHQ had an intelligence function, has its counterpart in the even more irrational treatment of the historical record.

The fact is that despite official policy there is a mass of material available. Such has been the public's taste for this subject that a highly selective, uneven (best on the Middle East) and often erratic *Dictionary of Espionage* consisting mainly of over 300 biographical entries has been handsomely produced for the popular market by two British foreign correspondents. The best-selling and influential accounts of Chapman Pincher and Nigel West (sometimes contradictory, as in the case of Sir Roger Hollis) depend heavily on inside information that cannot be checked. But there are works written by both academic and non-academic historians based on archival sources. The contributions in *The Missing Dimension* confirm the editors' claim that there is sufficient documentary evidence to "fill in the general outlines of the missing intelligence dimension and much of its operational detail".

Christopher Andrew, whose pioneering work on the Cambridge spies will appear in 1985, surveys the development of cryptanalysis in the 1920s by comparing the pre-1914 French experience with subsequent British and American advances. In all three cases, inter-bureaucratic rivalry and the inability of governments to handle the new intelligence sources delayed the emergence of professional departments. Despite impressive French cryptographic successes against Britain and Germany, fierce rivalry between the "cabinets noirs" of the Quai d'Orsay and the Sûreté, and indiscretions on the part of the French Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in 1911, prompted the Germans successfully to change their codes. Britain and the United States only re-entered the race during the Great War. The former remained in a state of "cryptographic innocence" from 1844 until the wartime activities of Captain "Blinker" Hall and Room 40 at the Admiralty (of Zimmerman Telegram fame) and the War Office MT-13 re-established British code-breaking. American cryptanalysis owed its unlikely origins to

the merchant and honorary Kentucky Colonel, George Fabyan, who was searching for the Baconian cipher to Shakespeare's plays.

The comic-opera side of both the British and American intelligence services between the wars is well depicted by Dr Andrew. The two British units, after fierce inter-fighting, were merged into a single Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) and placed under the reluctant tutelage of the Foreign Office, as was MI5 or Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Repeatedly, government ministers openly proclaimed the contents of the successfully intercepted Soviet diplomatic telegrams; Curzon actually taunted the Russians with his knowledge. Not surprisingly, in 1927 they adopted the theoretically unbreakable one-time pads, depriving GC&CS of its best source. The SIS was starved of men and funds; the Foreign Office was acutely uncomfortable about its cover, the Passport Control Department and its overseas representatives. SIS shunned university types, preferring, in Hugh Trevor-Roper's words, "minds untainted by the solvent force of a university education". As Cecil shows in his essay, the Comintern had fewer inhibitions. As late as 1938, SIS was a weak, inefficient and overstretched organization, poorly placed to monitor German developments because of its earlier excessive concern with the Bolshevik menace.

The American story was hardly more encouraging. After quite spectacular successes, particularly during the Washington Conference, peacetime regulations forbidding the interception of radio traffic cut the post-war Black Chamber's supply source. In 1929, Secretary of State Henry Stimson ("Gentlemen did not read each other's mail") put an end to the Black Chamber and its "unethical" activities. Fortunately, an Army Signal Intelligence Service headed by William Friedman and a parallel Navy unit continued the Black Chamber's work, marred by the usual competition and lack of funds until wartime improvements on both fronts paved the way for the 1940 breaking of "Purple", the Japanese diplomatic code.

Eunan O'Hallpin graphically describes the unfortunate results of such inter-service rivalry. There were five competing intelligence services at work in Ireland between 1914 and 1921. Poor communication between Dublin and London was compounded by unclear and contradictory political aims. The celebrated "Blinker" Hall withheld vital decrypted information from Dublin House in 1916 and then actually invented a "German plot" in 1918. If it were not so carefully documented, O'Hallpin's essay might be classified under "tall tales". The development of most Western intelligence systems was delayed and confused by domestic rivalries between separate agencies.

Wesley Wark and David Dilks draw attention to the kinds of information that can be found in the public records. Dr Wark, in his study of military and economic assessments of Nazi Germany, illustrates how each service and the newly created Industrial Intelligence Service evolved its own independent, specialized and false view of German war preparedness. The Army and Air Force were unduly optimistic about German plans until 1938 (the Navy until even later) and then, adopting a worst-case scenario, magnified the threat during the crises of 1938. The IIS fuelled government fears exaggerating the measure and success of German industrial mobilization, and then, along with the service departments, contributed to an upsurge in confidence in the post-Munich period by noting British success in closing the arms-race gap against a supposedly well-mobilized enemy. Strikingly, the new assessment did not result from any improvement in the actual balance of military forces but from a dramatic shift of perspective once it was assumed that war was inevitable. Wark may underestimate COS concern with the building of an Eastern and Balkan front, the strategic rationale behind the British guarantees of 1939, but his critique of their 1939 Strategic Appreciation shows how intelligence can be dangerously misinterpreted.

Professor Dilks casts considerable light on the relations between the Foreign Office and its SIS stepchild. He gives a rare example of an SIS paper (September 18, 1938) actually offering advice on high policy and making recommendations that were subsequently adopted by government ministers. Other cases are cited, many from the period between January and August 1939, where specific intelligence reports, true and false, became the basis for diplomatic and strategic decisions. He also shows, how British security leaks from the Rome embassy and the British Legation to the Holy See (located in the quarters of a branch of the Italian military forces) provided Mussolini and Ciano with excellent diplomatic ammunition against the British, compromising in turn both the King of Greece and Prince Paul of Yugoslavia. The story of Signor Constantini rivals the better-known "Cicero" episode in its more bizarre details. It will seem hardly credible to anyone not familiar with Foreign Office attitudes toward administration and security. At least Constantini was a foreigner; officials can only be condemned for negligence and stupidity though the trail may have led back to the "inner circle" at the Foreign Office.

A good many members of the diplomatic service just could not take questions of security seriously. This is all too clearly brought out in Cecil's piece about Blunt, Burgess, Maclean and Philby. Cecil was the Foreign Office liaison man with SIS during the war (the biographical notes to this volume might have been expanded) and knew the men about whom he writes. In his portrait of the world that produced, nurtured, protected and rewarded the "Cambridge Comintern", he raises questions too often avoided by academic commentators. He shows convincingly that there was a mass of evidence which might have cast doubt on the probity and professional fitness of each of these men, evidence that was forgotten, ignored, or purposely overlooked by well-meaning and often, though not always, intelligent friends and colleagues. The Foreign Office did not vet its diplomats (consular officials — the Cinderella of the diplomatic world — were more thoroughly investigated); if one family was not known to the principal private secretary, the names and positions of one's referees were a sufficient guarantee of community standing.

The Foreign Office remained an extended family well into the post-1945 period, with the benefits as well as the drawbacks of such a basically homogeneous unit. It seems fair to suggest that the wartime successes of Bletchley Park, its staff recruited through the old boys' and old girls' networks without formal security clearance, owed much to a common set of unspoken assumptions and shared language, however different the personalities of the individuals involved. The intimacies and trust, even that mandarin tone, which gave the Foreign Office its reputation, made it easier for betrayal to be concealed. For a few, the Soviets offered a positive ideological orientation that the looser and less clearly defined liberalism of British elite circles could not match. Nazism did not offer an attractive alternative; there were, we think, no Nazi spies at Bletchley.

David Kahn, in his concise and instructive survey of code-breaking successes in the two world wars, attributes Allied superiority during the Second World War to better organization and unified control. There seems little doubt from the numerous books, official and otherwise, that have appeared since the publication of Colonel Bertrand's memoirs in 1973 that Enigma was the British success story of the war. Code-breaking and intelligence, as Kahn makes clear, do not win wars but shorten them (the Second World War by at least three years according to Hinsley) and save lives.

Jean Stenger's most original essay uses new documentary sources and personal interviews to describe the French and Polish as well as the British contribution to the 1940 success in deciphering the Enigma intercepts. The French provided the Poles with the first German codes and ciphers, the so-called *Abschreibedokumente*. The Poles, principally through a brilliant mathematician, Marian Rejewski (who was in Britain during the war but knew nothing about Bletchley Park), contributed the theories and the machines which resulted in the first breaking of Enigma in 1933. British work between August 1939 and May 1940 owed a good deal to Polish information and an Enigma replica delivered to London in the summer of 1939. Subsequent advances were of a different order, the

product of new methods devised by the "Cambridge mathematicians". John Herivel, Alan Turing and Gordon Welchman, whose own book *The Hut-6 Story* is a mine of technical information.

In a book heavily focused on British intelligence it is particularly useful to have Jürgen Rohwer's authoritative review of his multinational archival work on the role of radio intelligence in the Battle of the Atlantic. He surveys the early B-Dienst successes against British convoy ciphers and the two phases of the Battle of the Atlantic in 1941 and 1943. It is interesting that Rohwer, like Hinsley and Patrick Beesly, sees the 1943 breakthrough as one of Bletchley Park's greatest achievements, though in terms of British survival the setback to the German U-boat campaign in 1941 may have been more critical.

The last two essays in this collection return to a crucial question. Democracy and covert intelligence make uneasy bedfellows. Harry Ransom's contribution to the Central Intelligence Agency brings this out sharply. The story is one of covert operations impinging more and more on the gathering and analysis of information. Since the mid-1950s, the pendulum has swung between independence and accountability as the Cold War has waxed and waned. Ironically, and in contrast to Britain, the CIA is the most publicized cloak-and-dagger outfit on the planet. It advertises openly for agents. Numerous Congressional and press investigators scrutinize its less savoury exploits.

In Britain, the scene is elegantly different. The very term "intelligence community" suggests a harmonious interplay between the various agencies and government control. This velvet term may, in fact, be quite misleading. Parliament simply lacks the investigative powers of its Washington counterpart. But any honest observer will find both archaic and self-defeating the refusal of successive British cabinets to create an intelligence select committee. Similarly, present methods used to protect the secrecy of the intelligence community have failed to prevent damaging disclosures. Alastair Palmer's study of the history of the D-Notice Committee shows the degree to which the assumptions upon which the old system of voluntary self-censorship rested have been abandoned in recent years. The committee was created as the result of the same pre-First World War spy scare that produced the Official Secrets Act. It was intended by the War Office as a means of avoiding confrontation with Fleet Street and was cemented by the "old school" code of honour. The arrangements were continued during the inter-war years but such was the lack of interest in defence and security questions that after 1923 the committee did not meet again for twenty-three years.

The revived and radically changed post-1945 system worked because its secretary, Admiral Thomson, cultivated editors to gain the press's trust and used his common sense on security questions. But this informal network could not survive the harsher world of the Cold War and a new mood in Fleet Street. Investigative journalism resulted in clashes with the government; the Aitken case and Harold Wilson's vendetta against Chapman Pincher brought the D-Notice Committee into disrepute. Compliance with its rulings offered no protection against official wrath; non-compliance did not result in imprisonment. The general consensus as to what constituted the "national interest" was eroded just as the "Influential Britons' Club" was losing its hold. At the time of the Falklands campaign, the press and government were at each other's throats; the D-Notice Committee was not even consulted. It seems highly doubtful, whatever the merits of the government's stand on the Hollis matter, that the present position on secrecy can possibly be maintained.

If this book alerts readers to the importance of intelligence and encourages historians to widen their perspectives and researches, it has more than served its purpose. And if the editors can convince the government that the release of intelligence records for the pre-First World War period will not endanger the security of the nation, they may begin a process that will have far greater implications than the opening of files on British intelligence in the

# The product of Bletchley

John Keegan

F. H. HINSLEY, E. E. THOMAS, C. F. G.

RANSOM and R. C. KNIGHT

*British Intelligence in the Second World War:*

Volume 3, Part 1

693pp. HMSO. £17.95.

011 6309350

F. H. Hinsley's magnificent official history of British intelligence continues its forward march, in this volume from the middle of 1943, when the Battle of the Atlantic had just passed its crisis, to the eve of the D-Day landings in June 1944. A fourth volume, Part 2 of this section, will take the story to the end of the war. It will be awaited with the greatest interest. The British official histories have been compared unfavourably hitherto with their American counterparts, and with some justice. None of the operational studies match in scope, quality, interest or readability the American naval histories produced by Samuel Eliot Morison's team or the army histories inspired by the methods of S. L. A. Marshall. Hinsley and his colleagues have redressed the balance. Their work is unique, the first official history of the operations of an intelligence system produced by any country, and of a quality that satisfies both the expert seeking elucidation of a particular inquiry and the general reader seeking enlightenment about what an intelligence service does.

That Volume 3 sustains the interest aroused by Volumes 1 and 2 is a tribute to the Hinsley team's mastery of their material and their method — now highly developed. For, in a paradoxical sense, this middle period of the war does not serve them well. In their first volumes they were documenting a secret — that the British had been able to read the German ciphers. In their second they were demonstrating how decrypting was made to work to Britain's advantage. The breaking of the *Kriegsmarine's* Shark key in December 1942 was crucial to the defeat of Dönitz's wolf-pack system in the Battle of the Atlantic in March 1943, as was the breaking of the German army's Chaffinch and Phoenix keys to the victory of Alamein. Here they are dealing with the doldrums of the Western allies' war. The crisis of the struggle at sea was past, in the Atlantic if not the Pacific, which lies outside the history's ambit. The strategic bombing campaign against Germany had not got into its stride, while Germany's aerial attack on Britain was in suspension. The North African operations had been triumphantly concluded but the invasion of Europe not yet begun, unless the Italian campaign is accepted, as it was by the British but not the Americans, as a strategic alternative. However hard the intelligence system struggled to prepare the ground for victories, therefore, the absence of a focus of decisive conflict, a *Schwerpunkt*, frustrated it. D-Day and round-the-clock bombing would create such *Schwerpunkte*. Until their creation, the intelligence system — Bletchley, SIS, SOE, the service departments — could only keep watch and ward.

What, then, does this volume tell us that we wish and need to know? First, about the state and development of the intelligence system itself. As the earlier volumes revealed, the Government Code and Cypher School (Bletchley Park) took time to establish both its expertise and its credentials. By 1943 both were hallmarked by glittering success and to be allowed access to Bletchley's "product" had become the touchstone of status in wartime Whitehall, rather than the other way about. The numbers of its staff had continued to expand (to about 9,000) in response to objective needs; of which the most important was to decrypt the transmissions of the *Geheimschreiber* (Fish), the tape-fed on-line encypting machine through which, from 1942 onwards, more and more of Germany's high-grade strategic communications were processed. This decrypting, largely dependent upon the building of the Colossus machines ("pioneer programmable electronic digital computers") in the first half of 1943, resulted in the product of a great deal of high-grade intelligence of durable value. Its acquisition may be regarded as the supreme triumph, at a purely intellectual level, of the Bletchley effort, since Fish was broken by sheer brainpower. The logical basis for the effort probably depended upon the

theoretical work of Alan Turing, that strange and tragic genius of British mathematics who spent his war years at Bletchley. But the crucial observations of flaws in the German traffic management and their mechanical exploitation was the work of others, notably Tutte, Newman, Michie and Good.

The accepted super-ordination of Bletchley and its "Special Intelligence" was matched by a smoothing of frictions between most of the other intelligence branches. SIS had done much to restore its credibility, damaged by the destruction of its European networks in 1940–41. It was still apparently not maintaining agents in Germany but had re-established outposts in Norway, France, Switzerland and part of the Balkans. Sweden was a particularly rich source; hints in the text suggest that such occasional reports as came from within Germany were brought by Swedes with freedom to travel there. Its relations with Special Operations Executive (SOE) were still squally; like the service intelligence departments, the traditional secret service regarded with suspicion an organization dedicated to subversion and sabotage. But SOE's own humiliation in Holland in 1942 had restrained its efforts to displace SIS in operational intelligence-gathering. The two continued to compete in France and elsewhere; only in Yugoslavia did SOE acquire a free hand. Both had their differences with OSS, the American organization which combined intelligence and subversive work under one head, but inter-Allied diplomacy at the Chiefs of Staff level kept these within check.

In the hiatus between the North African victory and the invasion of Europe, the weight of British intelligence work was concentrated on ascertaining German intentions and capabilities and the effect on them of Allied efforts at sea, in the air and in Italy. It is not altogether a happy story. But, though the intelligence system was itself guilty of some wishful thinking, the blame would seem more closely to attach to the high command and, in particular, to the Prime Minister. As time and the process of

historical revision draw out, the Mediterranean campaign and Balkan entanglement come to look increasingly misjudged. To do something in 1943 was clearly essential, particularly as the Russians were doing so much — though quite what, the Allies often had to guess. "While the Russians continued to make frequent requests for information", the authors report rather wearily, "they still supplied little or nothing in return." It was anyhow — probably though not certainly — logistically impossible so to redeploy Allied strength from the Mediterranean to Britain as to make a cross-Channel invasion feasible in 1943. But, even given Allied wishful thinking, Russian secretiveness and German resilience, it does not seem necessary to have extended Allied commitments in the Mediterranean as far as they were during 1943. A disabling "Easternism" — to adduce a First World War concept — seems to have attacked British strategic judgment in the period under review. Italy, the Balkans and the Aegean islands were each made to assume the appearance of a military incubus about Germany's neck, in exactly the same way as were Turkey and the Salonika Front in 1915–16, and for reasons almost as bad.

As a result, the British were tempted into overselling their strategic conceptions to the Americans and even into undertaking operations that the Americans would not buy. The worst-judged of these was the recapture of the Dodecanese Islands, hitherto largely occupied by Italian garrisons, at the moment of the Italian armistice in September 1943. Intelligence from the area was scanty; but any cautious assessment of that gleaned should have warned that the balance of advantage lay with the Germans, who were irreducibly strong in the air. As a result, the campaign went wrong from the start, with the loss of Rhodes, the key to the archipelago. British persistence in occupying islands they were doomed to lose merely inflated the extent of their eventual humiliation. In Italy, the British, with the Americans,

## PALADIN MOVEMENTS AND IDEAS

Series Editor: Justin Winfile

The *Paladin Movements and Ideas* series aims to provide clear and stimulating surveys of the ideas and cultural movements that have dominated history. With its special emphasis on contemporary thought and reactions, it is the new series for the 1980s and beyond. *Paladin Movements and Ideas* has been planned to furnish a broad approach for students, teachers, and general readers. The series takes the whole sweep of human history as its provenance. It will build into a complete library of authoritative, readable books dealing with every aspect of culture.

The first three titles, just published at £2.50 each, are:

**RATIONALISM** John Cottingham  
Traces the development of philosophical rationalism from Plato to the twentieth century.

**EXPRESSIONISM** Roger Cardinal  
This elegant and perceptive book interprets Expressionism as the product of a wide-ranging debate about the relations between art and nature that had flourished throughout the nineteenth century.

**DARWINIAN EVOLUTION** Antony Flew  
Antony Flew sets out just what Darwin did and did not say, and reveals that a sociological misreading of Darwin continues to obscure our understanding of the man and his work.

Coming in 1985

**THE PSYCHOANALYTIC MOVEMENT**  
Emeel Gellner

**STRUCTURALISM**  
José G. Merquior

**WESTERN TRANSCENDENTALISM**  
A. Robert Lee

**THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT**  
Helen McNell

GRANADA

## MATISSE

Nicholas Watkins

Thirty years after his death, Matisse has justifiably come to be regarded as one of the major painters in the history of art. This lavishly illustrated book, published to coincide with the major exhibition of his drawings and sculpture at the Hayward Gallery, London (4 October 1984 – 6 January 1985), presents all the latest findings on Matisse to enable a proper assessment of his art and artistic theory within a historical context.

This interesting, readable and lively book traces the origins and evolution of Matisse's life and work for everyone interested in this remarkable artist.

310 x 245 mm, 240 pp, 225 illustrations  
including 97 in colour

07148 2038 5 PHAIDON £25.00



Self-Portrait  
1939



were so much stronger than the Germans – whose Italian allies fell away at the critical moment – that outright defeat was scarcely a prospect they faced. But the campaign might have gone wrong for them at the invasion stage, and certainly could have gone faster than it did. The German evacuation of Sicily, and the Salerno and Anzio landings, were the key episodes. What does the present volume tell us about them?

About the success of the Germans in getting their three high-grade divisions out of Sicily it not merely concedes but endorses the justice of the other official historians' condemnation of slowness at Mediterranean headquarters. The intelligence judgment was soggy and higher commanders did not act upon the clues provided. At Salerno, on the other hand, intelligence could yield little that affected the conduct of the battle; there it was the incisiveness of decision – the maligned Mark Clark's, as it happens – that turned the tide at the critical moment. Over Anzio, it was command rather than intelligence that failed. Intercepts provided an accurate picture of the reserves available to the Germans, but the Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff judged that Allied strength was sufficient to withstand the shock of their intervention. The judgment was wrong, and was compounded by tactical indecision once the Allied troops were ashore. As in the Dodecanese, the Germans displayed a quite remarkable ability to improvise, outthinking the Allies as much as they outfought them.

Indeed, their capacity for improvisation may be the key to explaining British misappreciation of the progress of the war at many levels during this period. The British stereotype of the German mind, after all, was of something powerful in logic but rigid in set – a stereotype fostered at Bletchley precisely by the German signal organization's persistence with Enigma in the teeth of evidence that it was compromised. We now know that the Germans constantly reviewed their signal security, but also that they had a deadly blind spot. But in other areas – as the Russians could have confirmed had they dealt openly with the Western Allies in the exchange of information – the Germans showed a positively creative ability to change and adapt. Their professional soldiers had always put what they called "operational" – ie, reactive – capacity at the pinnacle of the gener-

al's art; some of them – notably Manstein – had shown improvisational genius in Russia. As their material superiority was eroded, their capacity to make a little go a long way, and quickly, became more and more pronounced. At Anzio they closed the ring around the bridgehead with "emergency battalions" formed at Rome railway station from men returning from leave. In the Dodecanese they conjured up a local air force from squadrons drawn from all over southern Europe. At Messina they achieved their own "saga of the little ships". And meanwhile at home in Germany they were remaking the structure of German industry to keep it safe from the hammer of Allied strategic bombing.

In Volume 2 the authors levelled strictures at the Ministry of Economic Warfare's groundless over-optimism in forecasting. In retrospect that may be judged to have been in part the effect of subjective factors; the Second World War was the first opportunity the relatively new profession of economist had had to apply its system of analysis directly to government policy. When applied to the equally inexact and novel strategy of strategic bombing, it is not surprising that its practitioners should have overestimated both the material results of the campaign and the indirect effects on the German economy to be extrapolated from it. It is very much to their credit, therefore, that during 1943–44 the economists of MEW made radical attempts to revise their estimates of how badly the German economy was hurting – as their colleagues in the US Strategic Bombing Survey might have put it. The answer was not very badly at all, thanks to the genius of Speer – not an economist – in dispersing manufacturing processes from the Ruhr to a complex of smaller engineering enterprises in central and southern Germany. At the end of the period under review, however, MEW estimates were still unrealistic, an anticipation of the influence of economic analysis on government policy perhaps as significant for the post-war years as it would be for the climatic change of strategic bombing in 1944–45.

Three other areas of strategic effort remain to be considered; the German pilotless weapons programme, Yugoslavia and the war at sea. The section on pilotless weapons is without question the most interesting in this volume, perhaps because it reviews how the whole arsenal of an intelligence system – signal intelligence (Sigint), human intelligence

(Humint), photographic interpretation (PR) and prisoner of war interrogation (POW) – fared against a programme protected by a security system designed to outwit it.

For once, the credit for penetrating the German security screen must go to the Secret Intelligence Service, rather than to Bletchley or the other agencies. Germany had located its pilotless weapons research station at Peenemünde, a remote Baltic peninsula, concentrated all activity there and eliminated radio reference to it. The mysterious "Oslo Report" of November 1939 had nevertheless alerted SIS to the existence of the V-1 and V-2 programme and it listened hard for more news thereafter. In August 1940 "a source in contact with Admiral Canaris" – the only reference to that ambiguous figure in this volume – pinpointed Peenemünde as significant, though after October 1940 no report was received for another two years. But SIS's attentiveness paid off. On December 18, 1942, a stock figure of spy fiction – "a chemical engineer who was travelling extensively on his firm's business" – overheard a conversation in a Berlin restaurant between two loose-tongued German technologists that put the game afoot again.

Its pace now quickened rapidly. A prisoner of war blabbed in January 1943. The captured Generals Crüwell and von Thoma talked indiscreetly to concealed microphones in March. In June photographic reconnaissance, intensive since January, at last revealed the presence of something that looked like a large missile at Peenemünde. By September over two hundred reports had been accumulated, of which 159 had been gathered by SIS, many of the preparation of launching sites on the northern coast of France.

For what sort of weapon still remained unclear. The Joint Intelligence Committee was bewildered by the truly revolutionary nature of the German V-weapons and by undifferentiated references to rockets (of unspecified size), pilotless aircraft, glider bombs and giant guns – all of which were indeed under development. It was also hindered by the informed scepticism of some scientists; notably Lord Cherwell, who had Churchill's ear and disbelieved fervently in the Germans' ability to construct a long-range rocket. When the separate existence of a flying bomb had been established, he disbelieved in that too, or at least in Germany's ability to manufacture it in quantity.

The deadliness of the threat, even should it

turn out to be the "mare's nest" Cherwell alleged it was, eventually came to count for more than the doubters' objections. Peenemünde, and the V-2 forward base at Waltersen, were effectively bombed in August 1943. So, too, in December were the French "ski sites" for the V-1. The War Cabinet felt it had gained a breathing space. The Germans, however, then displayed more of that tightrope adaptiveness which was baffling Allied amphibious and bombing strategy. Explosives or mobile launching apparatus for the V-1 and V-2 were substituted for large ramps, and caves for concrete storage bases. During the spring of 1944 the V-weapons, as targets, effectively disappeared, while as weapons they became ever more tangible and threatening. Bletchley had supplied its first decryption of traffic connected with the V-weapons in August 1943 and during early 1944 was able to monitor reports which revealed the range, speed and operating altitude of the V-1 during many test firings. In March the flying bomb was observed in flight over the Baltic by the master of a Swedish freighter, who timed the pulsations of its jet engine by his chronometer, and passed the details to the naval attaché in Stockholm. And in July Polish collaborators of SIS were actually able to bring fragments of the V-2 rocket to London.

But by then the first flying bomb had landed on the capital, while the rocket bombardment was soon to start. The intelligence agencies, though they had eventually succeeded in forewarning the government of what lay in store, had therefore not made possible an effective pre-emption of the offensive, though – given the small compass needed for the manufacture of the V-weapons – the plants were probably not vulnerable targets.

It is illuminating to contrast how well intelligence served the war effort at sea. On the European land mass the Western Allies were still but intruders into a German area of control. On the oceans it was the other way about. By March 1943 the wolf packs had been driven into coastal waters, and despite lively bluff and adaptation tried by Dönitz, there they were kept throughout 1943–44. When they tried to move submerged to patrol stations, their routes were detected by Bletchley intercepts; and when they risked "fighting it out on the surface" they were massacred by Allied aircraft. The decryption of insecure cipher messages from the Japanese naval attaché in Berlin to Tokyo further revealed that Dönitz's new U-boat types, which would indeed have put his wolf packs on terms again with the convoys, would not be ready in time to interfere with the D-Day sailings, a relief for which the Admiralty could be inexpressibly thankful. The disabling of the Tirpitz and the sinking of the Scharnhorst, to both of which Bletchley – and SIS, which had an agent watching the former ship at close range – made major contributions, were by comparison almost minor blessings.

The war in Yugoslavia, which was to be a test case for SOE of the Prime Minister's charge to it "to set Europe ablaze", was in a preliminary stage during the period covered by this volume. SOE had nevertheless achieved its initial objects of securing a monopoly of responsibility for the campaign from SIS and of dumping Mihailovic. What was to follow will no doubt figure largely in the fourth and final instalment of the Hinsley history; though the authors' cautious reference to the "vast literature that has grown up on the subject" suggests that even they may be weary of the effort of adjudicating between the different parties who claim to have controlled what was going on in those troubled mountains during 1941–5.

We need fear no weakness if they come to assess the contribution made by intelligence to the climactic phase of the war, when German adaptability showed at last face the West's adaptability, might across the "invasion beaches". Ralph Bennett's *Ultra in the West* and M. R. D. Foot's *SOE in France* have already alerted us to the scale and importance of what intelligence then achieved. When the last page of that volume has been composed, the last of these conditions is left unresolved. On the last page we read that in retrospect Harris's rigid adherence to the concept of area bombing was a mistake, but at the same time Harris is praised, especially in his dogged upholding of that principle of war, maintenance of the aim, and his ability to inspire those under him to carry it out.

## Kinnock, Kinnock, who's there?

Ben Pimlott

ROBERT HARRIS  
*The Making of Neil Kinnock*  
256pp. Faber. £9.95 (paperback, £4.95).  
0571 132669

G.M.F. DROWER  
*Neil Kinnock: The path to leadership*  
162pp. Widenfeld and Nicolson. £8.95 (paperback, £5.95).  
0287 785222

Since Neil Kinnock is likely to be around as Leader of the Opposition or Prime Minister until well into the next century, the sooner we find out about him the better. Yet there is a difficulty in writing "anticipatory" biography of the kind under review. The problem is not just that the history of a man without a past is dominated by present impressions. It is also that these impressions are in a state of flux. During the new Leader's first year – in which the mood of the Party has shifted from post-electoral shell-shock at Brighton to besieged defiance at Blackpool – perceptions of him have significantly altered. Hence the picture presented by both Robert Harris and G. M. F. Drower – not always intentionally – of a verbally fluent, genial lightweight already feels uncomfortably dated.

Both these books diligent, fair and interesting. Both, however, suffer from the difficulty that so far there is not a great deal to be said. As the titles imply, they cover much the same ground. Of the two, Harris was decisively on points. He is the better writer, his characterization is more subtle, and he gives to his account the shape, and something of the pace, of a thriller. Much of what he says is based on conversations with Kinnock's colleagues and enemies, and he has spent valuable time in South Wales digging at the Party Leader's grass roots. Drower relies mainly on newspaper clippings, and as a result gives too much importance to routine statements to the press of a kind that politicians shove out every night before brushing their teeth. Neither book is "authorized", and both seek to show their subject warts and all. Both writers, however, obtained interviews with Kinnock himself, and Harris in particular makes extensive use of material gained thereby. This is understandable, but a mistake. The portraits might have been sharper, with fewer punches pulled, if there had been no sense of obligation. Politically, both books are rather blandly uncommitted.

There is little disagreement about the facts of their interpretation. Central to each account, as to the Party Leader's own self-image, is his ordinariness. The theme is well-established: likely lad from a Welsh mining village – bad at work, good at games – shows no special aptitude until his early twenties. Then a mixture of talent, guts and fate raises him aloft. Both agree that it was Cardiff University and the rough-house of the students' union that set him up. Meetings were held at lunch time: it was here that, with his future wife Glynis as ally, he learnt to raise his voice above the din of the canteen. He campaigned for left-wing causes, became student president, and flunked his exams. He got a pass degree at his second attempt. "I just permitted myself to be distracted", he admits, "by sport or debates or politics or going to the cinema in the afternoon".

What turned a B-stream "lazy sod" (a friend's description) at grammar school into a high flyer? Both writers mention Kinnock's youthful enthusiasm for Aneurin Bevan, and the history of unemployment and industrial injury in his own family. Rivrality rather than seriousness, however, characterized Kinnock's routabout undergraduate career. "I've been fortunate", Kinnock claims, "in that I've never suffered from personal ambition." His biographers rightly disbelieve him. Yet the lift-off of the "average student at an average university" (as Drower calls him) is not closely examined, and the mystery of his motivations remains unresolved.

The spur to succeed was certainly sharp. Having left university, Kinnock moved fast. He took his first and only pre-parliamentary job, at twenty-four, as a tutor for the WEA. Three years later, he was selected as Labour candidate for one of the safest seats in the United Kingdom, and a year after that he was in Parliament. Future Party Leaders usually start young. Several – Churchill, Eden, Home and Wilson – have, like Kinnock, become MPs before the age of thirty. No Leader in this century, however, has had so brief an experience of the world of work outside Westminster. Nor has any politician, once elected, travelled so quickly to the top of his party. What was Kinnock's secret? Both authors stress his speaking ability and his charm. Then, somewhat at a loss, they turn to luck. Kinnock, they say, was born lucky. Even when his car somersaulted off the motorway with him inside, divine intervention was at hand to save him. "Someone up there likes me", said Kinnock at the time. Harris agrees. This remark, he suggests, not only summed up a miraculous escape, "it also seemed to sum up Kinnock's entire career".

To say that Kinnock's career has been lucky, however, is a way of avoiding the need for explanation. If Kinnock has had a habit of being in the right place at the right time, this has been because he has put himself there. Indeed in his first years in Parliament he showed a formidable ability to create his own opportunities. Thus, principle and self-advancement were judiciously combined during the 1974–79 Parliament when Kinnock opted for backbench independence, and refused offers of a junior ministerial post. It was in these years that he made his name with a series of well-targeted attacks on the government's managerial drift, and – in particular – with a brilliantly effective assault on plans for Welsh devolution. Courage or far-sightedness? Arguably, both. There were many other Labour MPs, easily tempted by office, who have since vanished without trace. Staying his ground, and accepting the disapproval of the Cabinet hierarchy, Kinnock was also building himself a Labour Party base.

According to Harris, a witty speech at a Tribune rally during the 1975 Party Conference was the turning-point of his career. "He went a bomb", says Joe Ashton, a fellow MP. "He was the star of the show. And there were 500 constituency votes in that audience." Standing for the Party Executive the following year, he picked up more than 150 of them. In 1978 he was elected to the Party Executive, second only to Benn in the constituency parties section. The reason? "There were few MPs attacking the Government as vociferously as he was", suggests Harris. It was Kinnock's perception of the widening gap between the government and its active supporters, and his energy in capitalizing on the split, that turned him into a leading politician. Though he criticized ministers in Parliament, Parliament was

by no means the main focus of his interest. Harris has done a count. In his first year as an MP, Kinnock voted in nine divisions out of ten: by 1982 he had one of the worst attendance records of any Member. "I've always considered that speaking around the country is an important part of being a Labour MP", he says, disarmingly. "You're a full-time, paid political activist".

Before the 1979 general election, Kinnock may have had long-distance hopes, but he cannot have anticipated the speed of his elevation. Callaghan was still in charge, Healey the heir apparent. After Labour's defeat, three developments put Kinnock in the centre of the stage: first, his own determination, having accepted the shadow education portfolio, to resist the demands of former allies on the Left; second, the surprise election of Foot as Leader, making another contest in the near future likely, with a good chance that the Party would go for a younger man; and third, the constitutional upheaval which gave the PLP a mere 30 per cent of the total vote in the new electoral college, and ensured that MPs would live in terror of their (usually left-wing) general management committees.

Like three predecessors (Attlee, Wilson, Foot), Kinnock gained the Leadership while moving from the Left toward the middle ground. In 1978, the press had called Kinnock an extremist and a fanatic. After 1979, he appeared, in media terms, a member of the "sensible" Left. There was his refusal, despite strong pressure, to pledge Labour to restore Tory education cuts in full. There were his views on Arthur Scargill ("He's destroying the coal industry single-handed") and on Militants ("They once stuck a dead rat and a used sanitary towel through my door"). There was his opposition to Benn in the Deputy Leadership contest ("I thought we needed a contest like we needed bubonic plague"). By 1982, some of his former friends were calling him "Judas".

At the time it was tough for Kinnock, and he risked losing his NEC seat as a reprisal. In the long term – as his detractors point out – he had much to gain. If there was bitterness against the Right after the 1979 poll for betrayals in government, there were likely to be recommitments against the far Left after the subsequent election, once it had been soundly lost. The Party Leadership, moreover, would once more be on the market. So it proved. Even before the election had taken place, the fight for Foot's succession had begun. At one of Kinnock's meetings, a heckler shouted: "Mrs Thatcher's got guts". Kinnock replied, in the best one-liner of the whole miserable, humbug-ridden campaign: "And it's a pity that other people had to

## Pressure from the pithead

Donald MacIntyre

ANDREW TAYLOR  
*The Politics of the Yorkshire Miners*  
332pp. Croom Helm. £19.95.  
07099 2447X

The publication of Andrew Taylor's *The Politics of the Yorkshire Miners* is well-timed. Taylor started from a privileged vantage-point. He was granted by leaders of the Yorkshire NUM unlimited access to both area and national documents, including executive minutes, and being the son of Arthur Scargill's successor as Yorkshire president, had an enviable entrée to NUM activists in the county. It is a pity that he has not used his opportunities to produce a more coherent account of what he himself describes as the "prehistory" – at least in so far as Yorkshire was concerned – of the present crisis.

Part of the problem is betrayed by the ambiguity of the book's title. There are two themes here – both fascinating ones – and Taylor has had only limited success in marrying them. One is the external relationship between the miners and both the Parliamentary Labour Party in general, and their own sponsored MPs in particular. The other is the internal politics of the area leadership; and the story of the left's assumption of control, after the 1972 strike, in what Taylor rightly and continually

reminds us had since 1944 been a predominant right-wing-led area.

The special relationship between the miners and the Labour party has rarely been in doubt since Ramsay MacDonald described the 1918 PLP as a "party of checkweighmen". Taylor argues, however, that even before the war, as miners' MPs reached Westminster and realized that there was a world beyond the pithead, this relationship became more a matter of form than substance. He shows how the Yorkshire NUM's headquarters ("The Tammany Hall in Huddersfield Road"), as it was described in the ever lively correspondence columns of the *Barnsley Chronicle* used its influence in the constituencies. In the 1950s and 60s, he also describes the strains on the mutual loyalty between miners and their MPs during the Labour administrations of the 60s and 70s, which culminated in the Yorkshire leadership being criticized by the committees of privileges in 1975 for attempting to dictate policy. But the account is seriously incomplete. Taylor describes in some detail the selection of the twenty-eight-year-old Roy Mason as MP in Barnsley, but he doesn't even mention the machinations within the constituency against him after 1979. He fails to do justice of the uneasy co-existence of a left-wing area leadership and a right-wing group of Labour MPs.

The book started as a PhD thesis, and that may explain why the material painstakingly examined by Taylor sometimes seems only half

leave theirs on the ground at Goose Green in order to prove it." Far from being a "major political blunder", as Drower suggests, this remark helped to make Kinnock front runner when a few weeks later, Foot resigned as Leader. Two factors determined the outcome: Benn's general election defeat in Bristol, which pushed him out of the race; and the trade unions. In the event, the trade unions went quickly and massively for Kinnock. Deprived of a serious left-wing alternative, the constituency parties followed suit. Battered MPs, relieved not to be offered anybody more frightening, fell into line. There was no bandwagon. The battle was no sooner joined than won.

What, from these two books, can we learn about Kinnock as a man? That he is emotional, impulsive, voluble, funny, informal. That he is gregarious, naturally egalitarian and hates privilege. That – at his best – he is an outstanding stump orator. That he is likeable and straightforward, acute without being devious. That he is a middle-brow, closer to Attlee and Callaghan than to Gaitskill, Wilson or Foot. Drower calls him a meritocrat. The term is inappropriate. Kinnock is untested. He has no area of expertise, and no experience of administration. He has climbed no promotional ladder. He has made his way, instead, on the basis of a sixth sense for the labour movement and its nuances, an instinct for its values and a keen judgment of its byzantine procedures. He is good with middle-class socialists, to whom he speaks the language of the student debating chamber. He is even better with trade unionists, who feel that he is one of them. He is best of all in working men's clubs. Pretty wife, rugby fanaticism, frequent use of "bloody" in off-the-cuff exchanges, give him a rank-and-file macho with which no other post-war Leader has been equipped.

In style and rhetoric, like his hero Aneurin Bevan, he is a product of Methodist halls and an ancient tradition of Celtic Independent Labour Party evangelism. Yet he is also a break with the past. Gaitskill, Wilson, Callaghan, Foot – all four of his immediate predecessors – entered the Commons in 1945. First elected a quarter of a century later, Kinnock skips not one political generation but two. As an MP, he knows nothing of Crippsian austerity or Wilsonian pursuit of growth, or of the years of so-called "consensus". Michael Foot spent his youth attacking Neville Chamberlain; for Kinnock, the enemy was Lyndon Johnson. In spirit, like many of his entourage, he still belongs to the anti-Vietnam war, anti-authority, campus power 1960. Already he has presided, with considerable assurance though not without criticism, over a restoration of balance and unity in the Labour Party.

digested. For there is something missing, too, from his account of the growth of industrial militancy in Yorkshire. Up to the mid-1960s the only one of Yorkshire's four semi-official "panels" of NUM activists to be dominated by the Left was that based in Doncaster and led by Owen Briscoe, the present Yorkshire secretary. Yet by the end of 1969 this situation had been transformed. In the process, and in the important strike over surface workers' hours, Scargill's personality and ambition must have played an important part, yet Taylor gives us little insight into it. He somewhat woodenly observes that Scargill's prominence in leading the flying pickets from Barnsley in the 1972 strike propelled him into the job of compensation agent a year later. But what of the previous years? Taylor makes two tantalizing mentions of the Barnsley Miners' Forum, the unofficial body which helped to spread militant ideas across the coalfield. And there is the occasional reference to militant resolutions from Scargill's home branch of Wooley – like the 1971 wages resolution which Taylor accepts as the "casus belli" of the 1972 strike; but there is precious little sense of the human forces which lay behind these developments.

The revised edition of *Theories of Trade Unionism: A sociology of industrial relations* by Michael Poole (265pp. Routledge. £7.95. 0 7102 0020 X), first published in 1981, has recently been reissued in paperback.

## Keeping them dropping

Brian Bond

CHARLES MESSENGER  
*Bomber Harris and the Strategic Bombing Offensive, 1939-1945*  
244pp. Arms and Armour Press. £12.95.  
085368 6777

In the course of the Second World War Bomber Command carried out approximately 300,000 sorties by night and 67,000 by day, dropped almost 1,000,000 tons of bombs and caused about 800,000 fatal casualties. The price paid was very great: more than 8,000 bombers were lost during operational sorties, and more than 46,000 airmen lost their lives. Out of every one hundred airmen who joined an Operational Training Unit it was calculated that only twenty-four would survive unharmed – the worst odds in any branch of the fighting services. The conception and execution of the RAF's strategic bombing campaign, both in terms of cost-effectiveness and morality, have always been controversial, and there is no end in sight to the literary war of attrition.

Charles Messenger has been unlucky in the timing of his study in that Sir Arthur Harris's recent death made possible the publication of Dudley Seward's official biography which naturally gained more public attention. Messenger disclaims any intention of writing a rival biography, but it must be said that Harris's personality, opinions and responsibilities loom very large indeed. The author does however stake a largely convincing claim to have presented a dispassionate picture of Harris and the strategic bombing campaign. This is a welcome contrast to much recent writing on the subject

in which emotions of loyalty or indignation are more in evidence than historical understanding or careful documentation. Indeed Messenger's detailed narrative, neatly arranged in ten chapters, taking the bomber offensive from the early frustrations and the switch to night bombing, via the development of new technical aids and the Pathfinder concept, to the battles of Berlin, Hamburg and Dresden, can be warmly recommended as an introductory survey for new readers. He is particularly successful in showing the irritating effects of Harris's prickly character and stubborn adherence to the strategy of area bombing even on men who were basically supporters such as Churchill and Portal. As late as December 1944, for example, Harris was still describing oil targets as "a panacea" and devoted less than 8 per cent of that month's sorties to them. There are some choice quotations on inter-service rivalry. Just before Overlord, for example, Alan Brooke noted, "Bert Harris told us how well he might have won the war if it had not been for the handicap imposed by the other two Services." Earlier, in December 1942, one admiral wrote to another, "Our fight with the Air Ministry becomes more and more fierce as the war proceeds. It is very much more savage than our war with the Huns..."

For readers more familiar with the main points of controversy it is a little disappointing, particularly in view of the new evidence available since the publication of Webster and Frankland's magisterial *Official History*. In 1961, that the author has not attempted a more systematic scholarly analysis, or presented forthright conclusions.

Crucial topics which are touched upon but not sufficiently isolated from the narrative in-

clude: British Intelligence regarding Bomber Command's material effects and German counter-measures; the controversy over target priorities; and Harris's relations with the Air Ministry, the Chief of Air Staff and the War Cabinet.

Where he misses a real opportunity to break fresh ground concerns the topics of the wartime controversy over the morality of bombing and the problem of low morale among air-crew referred to as "Lack of Moral Fibre" (or LMF). Perhaps in a study focused on Harris and Bomber Command it would be unreasonable to expect more than a passing reference to the moral objections of Bishop Bell or Liddell Hart, but the LMF issue surely merited more attention than a tantalizing page or two.

The final chapter, "The Reckoning", provides a concise and fair summing-up of the main areas of controversy. Messenger demonstrates that, contrary to the prevalent myth, Harris was not snubbed by Churchill or deprived of honours which he might reasonably have expected in the immediate aftermath of war. In summing up the moral dilemma he wisely quotes Frankland: "I think that the big moral question is whether you will fight at all. If you will, I think one's proper duty is to win as quickly and cheaply as possible." Whether or not the bomber offensive actually fulfilled these conditions is left unresolved. On the last page we read that in retrospect Harris's rigid adherence to the concept of area bombing was a mistake, but at the same time Harris is praised, especially in his dogged upholding of that principle of war, maintenance of the aim, and his ability to inspire those under him to carry it out.



## Driven to destruction

T. O. Treadwell

**TOM SHARPE**  
*Wilt on High*  
236pp. Secker and Warburg. £8.95.  
0436-45811 X

This is the third instalment in the chronicle of the hapless Henry Wilt, and the many readers to whom *Wilt* (1976) and *The Wilt Alternative* (1979) gave pleasure will welcome the return of Tom Sharpe's accident-prone hero, still a sane and rational voice in a nihilistically comic universe of stupidity, greed and malevolent coincidence.

Wilt is now forty-three and Head of the Department of Communication Skills and Expressive Attainment (formerly Liberal Studies) at Fenland Tech in Ipsford, the lightly-disguised Cambridge where all three novels are set. His wife, the dim-witted but energetic Eva, is still fretting at Wilt's sexual apathy and his quad daughters, ghastlier than ever now that they have been sent to a prodigiously expensive school for gifted children by their dotting mother, have electrified the latch on the garden gate and invented a computerized telephone answering machine that advises incoming callers to fuck off.

The world of the Wilt novels has darkened. The violence in *Wilt* consisted largely of Henry's fantasies of uxoricide, and though a domestic murder is attempted in that novel it is prevented by farcical fate in the person of a sozzled clergyman. *The Wilt Alternative* has mindlessly vicious political terrorism as the mainspring of its plot and a villainess who is a coldly-beautiful multiple murderer, but though the bullets fly nobody in the novel is actually killed.

The complications in *Wilt on High*, by contrast, begin with the discovery of the body of a student at the Tech, dead from an overdose of heroin laced with PCP (the novel's title has multiple meanings, but the drug allusion is paramount), and this is not the only fatality. One time or another, Wilt's old adversary, Inspector Flint of the Ipsford constabulary, has been removed from the drug squad, largely because his own son is doing a five-year stretch for smuggling cocaine, and his replacement, the obsequiously unscrupulous Inspector Hodge, decides that Wilt is the criminal genius at the heart of the local narcotics network and undertakes a programme of non-stop surveillance.

Wilt, meanwhile, has other problems, and these, as in *The Wilt Alternative*, centre on his member. In an effort to perk Henry up, Eva has sought the help of the sinister Dr Kores, a vaguely Germanic man-hater from the Animal Husbandry Department of the University who runs a clinic for women with problems, which means prescribing their husbands inadequately tested and powerful drugs. Under her influence, Eva introduces a substance originally designed to ginger-up pigs into Wilt's home-brewed lager; he unwittingly ingests six times the recommended dose and rapidly develops a more-or-less permanent erection.

Good farce combines the maximum of activity with the minimum of comprehension on the part of the actors. Wilt, who asks only to pursue the noiseless tenor of his ways, is subjected by his creator to a beating from a female PE instructor, threats from a vicious criminal, harassment by corrupt and stupid policemen and violent interrogation by the security service of the USAir Force, all for malfeasances of which he is either innocent or ignorant, and bearing an insistently rampant phallus before him the while. In a world of moral and mental pats he is humiliated and betrayed – but in the end, as in the earlier novels, he triumphs. "I'm just mither sick-in-the-middle who doesn't know which way to jump," Wilt tells Eva at one particularly fraught moment. "But my God I do think!" It is Wilt's independence of mind that keeps him through; by the end of the novel he is able to reflect with satisfaction that he is, finally, no one's victim.

Independence is a rare commodity in *Wilt on High*; most of the characters are zombies, driven, if not literally by drugs, then by the narcolepsy of ambition, selfishness, or a blind obedience to authority which, as Wilt's experience with the American military teaches him,

threatens to destroy the world. Only the banal bloody-mindedness of ordinary men and women stands in the way of Armageddon, and there isn't very much of it left.

As the themes of *Wilt on High* are blacker than those of the earlier novels in the series, so the humour is more savage. Old friends like the sardonic Dr Board and his jargon-ridden antagonist Dr Mayfield return, but only perfunctorily, and the novel contains far less genial monsters – Lord Lynchknowle, for example, who won't allow the news of his daughter's death by overdose to come between him and his Lafite 1962 and game pie. The awful Wilt quads are a rich source of comedy, but there are fewer of the great bravura scenes that made the earlier books such a pleasure. More worryingly, *Wilt on High* is less tightly plotted than the earlier novels in the series; a number of promising characters and episodes are introduced but then forgotten, and there are patches of loose writing – characters eye one another with loathing rather too often, for example.

A bleak moral vision often underlies effective farce, and *Wilt on High* has much to enjoy as well as something serious to say, but readers who come to the novel expecting the wild hilarity of Sharpe's previous Wilt stories are likely to be disappointed.

## Superman souped up

John Rosselli

**GEORGE MACBETH**  
*The Lion of Pescara*  
256pp. Cape. £8.95.  
0224 022490

It is no doubt poetic justice that Gabriele D'Annunzio, an intermittently great poet whose life was one vast advertisement for himself as lover and superman, should now be the subject of a novel in which his erotomania and swashbuckling stand out and his lyric gift gets little more than a passing mention. D'Annunzio's own novels specialized in what, around the turn of the century, was reckoned sordid physical detail: and here he is, ensnared in a novel a prominent part of whose burden is his alleged fixation on oral sex and senile declension into coprophagy, abetted by a girl of eleven.

The "total recreation of life as a kind of macabre or violent art", here ascribed to one of his followers, was not far from D'Annunzio's own aim in his "transit from action to action", particularly after he had found himself in 1915 as an authentically daring soldier-sailor-airman, and, with the march on Fiume in 1919, as the sometime ruler of a utopia compounded of nationalism, syndicalism and carnival. George MacBeth sets out to write a novel soaked in the D'Annunzian phantasmagoria yet distanced by an irony to which the *Commandante* seldom gave way. The result is a curious, often uneasy amalgam. *The Lion of Pescara* does sustain over a good many of its pages an *ambiance* of lush grotesquerie; yet it stumbles again and again, sometimes over the need to soup things up for the jaded late twentieth-century book-buyer, more often over the inflexibility of the data – for this is after all a chase after that awkward quarry a "real person".

The book opens in 1916 with the middle-aged D'Annunzio temporarily blinded, writing his autobiographical prose poem *Notturno* on ten thousand cards in a house in Venice where every clock tells a different time. It makes forays into the poet's past, his love affairs with Eleonora Duse and many others, his flight to France from his creditors, his exploits in helping to bring Italy into the war and in fighting it. It then moves forward to narrate in chronological order the rest of D'Annunzio's life – the Fiume expedition, the uneasy dealings with the rising Mussolini, and the last years which the poet, now Prince of Monte Nevoso, spent creating an extravagant mausoleum for himself in a villa by Lake Garda with a naval cruiser built into the hillside.

The narrator is D'Annunzio's long-serving secretary Tomaso Antonini, who occasionally acts as a channel for D'Annunzio himself or for another reporter. At first sight Tomaso looks like the deliberately neutral (even neutered) storyteller of historical novels such as *Count*

## Mauvais goo in old Havana

John Butt

**GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE**  
*Infante's Inferno*  
Translated by Suzanne J. Levine  
410pp. Faber. £9.95.  
0571 132928

The Spanish languages are many and varied, and every Hispanic country has its cockney and provincial, as well as its educated standard. At one extreme are the impenetrable street jargons of Buenos Aires, Caracas or Madrid; at the other the irreconcilables in the moribund *Academia* pretending that the language remains essentially the same as St Teresa's. Somewhere between is a mid-Atlantic literary *Koine*, which can be studied at its lifeless worst in Radio Moscow newscasts or in *Selecciones del Reader's Digest*, and which at its best has a certain ponderous Latinity which skilled writers like Juan Goytisolo, Martín Santos, José Donoso, Alejo Carpentier and Julio Cortázar have satirized or parodied in subtle and effective ways, but which does not easily create the illusion of casual speech. García Márquez said that he avoided dialogue in his novels because it never sounds convincing in Spanish, and

characters in Hispanic novels, and even plays, often seem to talk like books.

It may be impossible to bridge the gap between living Spanish speech and writing without forgoing the ideal of a single language. The size of the problem is clear in the novel of Cabrera Infante, who in *Tres tristes tigres* (1965) set about what he recognized as the difficult job of transcribing Havana Spanish with the warning that "some pages are better heard than read". The result was a language ungrammatical and bastardized, but so vivid that it made an unanswerable case against the remoteness of literary Spanish, and proved that the language of Cervantes was still alive and growing even where Hispanic civilization had succumbed to fast food and sex shows.

*Tres tristes tigres* revealed the author's linguistic awareness; in *Infante's Inferno* that awareness has become acute glossomania. The novel has two themes, language and sex, both pushed about as far as they can go. The Spanish original (*La Habana para un infante difunto*, 1979) reads as if made of words which, from too much coosetting, have grown out of control and become less a medium for saying things than a sort of exotic carnival din. The narrator author is in love with Havana idiom ("so vulgar", the hero says, "so alive, and I miss it"). But as well as a linguist he is also a punner, and the result is a prose so overblown, emperpured and word-bound, so madly alliterative, so riddled with groan-making play of the sort that would clear a taproom in seconds, that the book is what the narrator, in his inimitable way, would probably call a manual of mauvais goo.

Some of the entries in this compendium of low wit are memorable ("Please come and visit us soon. My husband is so moody and, therefore, a sodomite"). A few are just tolerable; you are in the mood ("Sick transit, Gloria Swanson"). But most are plain verbal dexterity ("I caressed both breasts. Udder joy," "she was a sphincter without a secret", "the totally tacile temptation of Tiny Tim"). A plea of translation problems or poor English cannot be entered in mitigation of these and crimes, because it is clear that Suzanne Levine and the author cold-bloodedly and premeditatedly every wicked act. But let the narrator make his case: "Nothing please me more than vulgar sentiments, vulgar expressions, vulgarity itself . . . After all, I'm not writing a history of culture, but rather putting vulgarity in its place – which is close to my art."

The story, of a young erotomane's initiation in *ancien régime* Havana, is in the same spirit, a hilarious catalogue of what he calls *coup de foure*, though his machismo is undermined by his tendency to be distracted on the job by some lexical oddity or phonetic quirk of his partner, or by the chance of a quick pun. The picture of pre-Revolutionary Havana corresponds to the late-capitalist Sodom and Gomorrah of Castroite lore, except that the street walkers are a scream and life is fun and amazingly free. But there is a deafening silence about what came after which must make us read this celebration of old Havana as a comment on the new. Just as Havana is now a dead language (or language of the dead) gone with the hurricane of history hurrying over cane fields, gone too are the dives and cell-houses, turned over to crèches, literacy centres or houses of Soviet-Cuban friendship, the go-go girls now ageing in Miami or quite abandoned to high-mindedness and socialist endeavour. You feel that every dirty joke and every triumphant conjugation is really an unspoken indictment of the dreary Castroite world to come.

It is good that this Caribbean Alexander has his Durrell. It is also true that a few days of Eastern-bloc "culture" can convince westerners that where there is no pornography there is no freedom, but the argument is of uncertain efficacy and best suppressed. Anyway, the hero confesses that "I was young then and the young always blow everything out of proportion", so we can go on suspecting that this new Havana is not as respectable, and the old one not as exhilarating as he suggests.

With the same fictive parentage, Fugleman cannot help but be the sibling of Seldon Goldberg, hero of Jacobson's first novel, *Coming From Behind*. Both are patently the elphers of autobiography, but their names have changed. The jealousy which so consumed Goldberg as he floundered, knee-deep in a rotting Midland's polytechnic, has now been transformed into the very stuff of libido. For Fugleman, sexual gratification is not married but quickened by the success of a rival for the same woman's bed. Which brings us back to the loathed figure of Hardy, who by the end of the first half has

come to loom over Fugleman's doings like a disabling bore. "The daemon, you see", says Camilla, Fugleman's second wife, to her tourist class at the Hardy summer school in Cornwall, must be free to watch and feel the pain himself. The seduction of Balthesba, the rape of Tess, the subjugation of Elfride, are all observed as by an injured third party, jealously. And the more assured the rival's mastery, that's to say, the more complete the woman's surrender, then the more exquisite the sense of injury . . . Hardy was using his novels to have the women he loved, real or imaginary – it comes to the same thing – violated by proxy.

Barney's activities in this quarter are less cerebral by far than those of his unsought model, and they give rise (I use the word advisedly) to some telling sexual farce – very funny, but at the same time shot through with the tender passions of self-discovery. Jacobson's triumph is to stalk the high comedy which in turn stalks the erotic (and vice versa) and to make the one lance the other at the point of climax.

There is a second "secular" counterpart to the Hardy theme, a brilliantly evoked amorous quadrille between Barney's parents and the neighbouring couple, the Flatmans (Mrs F. having once been the object of his own pubescent fantasies), at the end of which it transpires that he sprang not from the Fugleman, but from the Flatman womb. All those years he had been fancying his own mother. Oivey! Not only is he being pulled apart by a stiff Victorian, but now his own flesh and blood are weighing in with fresh ambiguities.

Fugleman, what's in a name? Whether or not Jacobson intended the irony, it's there plainly enough. For Barney starts out by being the very reverse of a regimental exemplar – more fugue than Fugleman – dragged along as a passive variation behind the primary melodies of others. Not until the very end does he turn the tables on his dead and living legacies as, in a memorable seascape scene, he consigns an unopened letter, the last token of a dead relationship, to the cliff breezes, "floating down with a rocking motion into the opal and the sapphires of that wandering western sea".

This is more than fleshly valediction, it is a last, trumpeting dismissal of a dead man for whom the note unread and the message gone astray were the stock-in-trade of human frailty.

## The nobody's unnoticeable nipple

Peter Kemp

**CHRISTOPHER PRIEST**  
*The Glamour*  
303pp. Cape. £8.50.  
0224 022741

*The Glamour* is a book about invisibility in which it is increasingly hard to see what the author is getting at. The novel opens in what looks like familiar mystery-fiction territory: its main character, Richard Grey, has been afflicted with amnesia after being caught in a car-bomb explosion. When the story starts, he's in a convalescent hospital where – as Priest recounts in his usual concise and precise prose – he makes gingerly efforts to regain his physical stability and to re-assert control over his memory.

Though Grey has been a cameraman, professionally given to the creation of images, he finds he's unable to come up with any that might illuminate his blankness about the months before his accident. Then, out of cloudy weather – "there was a dulling haze over everything" – and the mists of his past emerges an ex-girlfriend, Sue, claiming to have played a major role in his life during those weeks that have been left a crater of oblivion by the bomb.

Grey's strong, but ambivalent, response to her galvanizes him into stepping up his attempts to overcome his amnesia. He allows two doctors to try to dispel it by hypnosis – with

unexpected results: coming round from his session of induced unconsciousness, he senses that something out of the ordinary has happened. Later it is revealed that, during his trance, he disappeared from the doctors' sight.

This brings emphatically into view the book's central concern: one that subsequent sections – allocated to different narrators, some first-person, some third – push Grey ever closer to perceiving. Invisibility, it materializes, is the real bond he shares with Sue. During their affair in the weeks leading to his injury, she has gradually revealed to him that there's more – or less – to her than meets the eye. From childhood onwards, she has known that she possesses "the glamour", an ability to make herself invisible, and on moving to London has found that there are hordes of people like her, some of them permanently invisible to all scrutiny but that of other "glams", as they term themselves. Most of the "glamorous" gang don't, it seems, live up to the usual connotation of their label, being dirty, disturbed, and prone to dental problems arising from understandable difficulties in getting their teeth looked at. Among them, though, Sue has encountered one who is fully glamorous, Niall, a would-be writer, totally immersed in invisibility. Soon, he's immersed in Sue, too: and reacts with possessive fury when she leaves him for Grey, whom she's recognized as "incipiently glamorous".

In earlier work such as *A Dream of Wessex* or some of his "Dream Archipelago" stories, Priest achieved powerful and disorientating

blends of the occult and the obsessive. Here, the mixture is more rum than potent. To illuminate his notion of invisibility, he tries out a plethora of hypotheses. Hypnosis figures prominently, with talk of "negative induced hallucination": "perhaps it was possible that some people had the unconscious ability to hypnotize people around them so they could not be seen". Amnesia also supplies woozy analogies. On a less clinical level, outlandish mundane explanations of the phenomenon are forthcoming. Perhaps Sue – once almost incinerated when her father lit the fire without noticing her bending over it – became invisible to her parents because of "failure of vision of another kind: an inability to see her growing up and changing". Many "glams", it's intimated, are nobodies who've taken their status to a logical conclusion by disappearing from view.

Earnest, somewhat sociological notes of this kind give an odd ring to many of the book's sections. Accounts of the "shadow world" of the "glams" – as opposed to that of "fleshers" – are couched in terms curiously reminiscent of old-fashioned documentaries on "social deviants". Being transparent, it often appears, can raise the same problems as being transvestite or transsexual. At other times, Priest's glum glams seem like figures from some lugubrious pre-Wolfenden commentary on homosexuals: nervy loners susceptible to VD and wistfully scornful of normality, they lead dismal lives, rarely coming out of their invisibility except to congregate morosely in special pubs among their half-resented kind.

## Strong-shouldered

Peter Lewis

**JOHN HALE**  
*The Whistle Blower*  
239pp. Cape. £8.50.  
0224 22571

Novelists who operate in or near the journalistic zone of the fiction spectrum thrive on topicality, and John Hale's eighth novel is nothing if not topical. In the first place, *The Whistle Blower* is very much an angry novel for 1984, the scattered references to Orwell drawing attention to what Hale sees as the disturbing resemblances between Britain today and the vision of 1984 itself. For Hale, Britain may present the illusion of an open society, but under it he locates creeping totalitarianism, layers of conspiratorial secrecy within the Establishment, and officially sanctioned machiavellianism devoted to preserving the status quo at any cost.

Hale's title is a slang phrase for someone who leaks secret information to the press and the public, in this case about the unacceptable, hidden face of national security, especially the activities of largely self-monitoring intelligence services. The would-be whistle blower, Bob Jones, is a specialist on Russian affairs at GCHQ in Cheltenham, an institution that has recently received plenty of adverse publicity, partly because of the Prime case. Hale only touches on this real-life spy scandal, but develops at length a fictional parallel involving a GCHQ mathematician and Soviet mole, Dodgson, who is beginning a long prison sentence for his treachery. Increasingly aware that he is a cog in an amoral and American-dominated machine, supposedly existing to uphold a decent, liberal, democratic way of life but often resorting to the most obnoxious of methods, Bob Jones has decided to defy the Official Secrets Act and reveal what he knows about the ghastly hypocrisy of the whole enterprise. Before he can do so, he is "terminated with extreme prejudice" (to use CIA jargon) by his own country's security service, but in such a way as to make his death look like suicide or an accident.

The novel opens with Bob's father Frank being informed of his son's death, and the main narrative describes Frank's determined effort to discover what happened to Bob and why, culminating in his decision to take over the role of whistle blower himself. The underlying pattern is that of an individual's struggle against external authority or the state. Especially in the early stages, there are frequent flashbacks

to crucial conversations between father and son, and Frank's quest is also intercut with the interrogation of Dodgson by British intelligence in conjunction with a CIA polygraph expert. The climax of this sub-plot is the successful conclusion of an elaborate, ingenious yet morally dubious plan of double and triple bluff to obtain from Dodgson the names of his two fellow-traitors at GCHQ without his realizing that he has betrayed them.

Frank, a small businessman of unimpeachable patriotism who used to support Labour but has drifted to the right, optimizes Middle England; even his superficial contact with the world of intelligence makes him aware of the frightening contradictions in the Western ideology he has unconsciously assumed in the past. Although *The Whistle Blower* draws on the conventions of both the spy thriller and the detective story, it is in fact a kind of *Bildungsroman* of middle age, a novel of moral and political awakening. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid comparisons with John le Carré. Hale's numerous allusions to Lewis Carroll, his diagnosis of the secret world as inherently paranoid, recall *The Looking-Glass War*, and his preoccupation with the gulf separating Western ideals and the ruthless expediency used to defend them is a characteristically le Carré theme. Le Carré's spy-speak for the CIA is "the cousins"; Hale uses "the good friends".

Le Carré said that he wrote *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* with passion, and Hale could presumably say the same of *The Whistle Blower*; but whereas le Carré achieves a sophisticated balance by allowing Leamas, the spy so deviously manipulated by his own service, to put the case for its morally offensive activities, Hale chooses to stoke up his polemical fire without providing any such defence.

**WILLIAM GARNER**  
*Rain's Alley*  
264pp. Heinemann. £8.95.  
0434 282618

Morpurgo, central figure of William Garner's last thriller, *Think Big, Think Dirty*, has been demoted and moved sideways in British Intelligence. His new chief, Epworth, duplicitous and devious beyond measure, involves him in an operation conducted in rivalry with the CIA; the prize apparently the key to untold crude oil reserves. But plot and narration are as subtly tortuous as the characters, and Morpurgo has just as much difficulty in keeping up as the reader does. Good climactic scenes in Spain do something to redeem excessively intricate and elliptical build-up.

T. J. B.

1. 1984 10 12 1984



# Coming in one by one

Christopher Hawtree

BARBARA TRAPIDO  
Noah's Ark  
255pp. Gollancz. £8.95.  
0375 035013

Emotional chaos as created by international conferences is rapidly forming a recognizable branch of English fiction. The podium itself is mercifully absent from *Noah's Ark*. Barbara Trapido's second novel, but all around its engaging heroine, the thrice-married Ali Glazer, men's brows crease from worrying about deadlines, timetables and how much to stow in the flight-bag. For Ali, "who was capable of cutting cheese with her credit card on summer picnics – all manner of domestic improbabilities were after all made possible". This, the bemused opinion of her third husband, Noah, a "lung-man" in a local clinic, comes at the end of a fraught summer in which people from the past enter one by one during his absence and, through Ali's innocence, create a sequence of events which in other hands would seem the most improbable of farces. Barbara Trapido's wit can swiftly wound, but does not alienate the reader's delight in those characters who banter wittily for half an hour "on the subject of an esoteric letter controversy currently raging in the *Times Literary Supplement*".

The setting is not precisely stated at first, but the suspicions aroused by a snide reference to hand-made shoes from the excellent Duckers in the Turl are strengthened by the descriptions of someone's ever-changing lodgings in the Abingdon Road and confirmed by a confrontation with the Oxford police. The shoes belong to Noah. A year after her second husband, the boorish Mervyn, had finally left her for a student with a wilting poster of Virginia Woolf blu-tacked to the wall, Ali was rushing to meet the deadline set by her eleven-year-old daughter, Camilla, for the supply of a name-tagged bag of sportswear. Almost knocked over by a motorist, she was held back by an angry young man, who was white's younger colleague, Arnie; it is the latter who is forced to live in the Abingdon Road, and involvement with the city's police comes from the hefty kick he gave to the road-hog's vehicle.

Such are the circumstances which brought

together the crowd of names on the opening page. The American connection apart, *Noah's Ark* has its origins in South Africa. Ali's childhood there led to infatuation with the long-lost Thomas Adderley and then to reluctant marriage to a British rugby-player who, two years earlier, had given her gonorrhoea at the age of sixteen. The only reminder of these days is William Lister, a perennial greasy revolutionary, whose devotion to part of the cause counterpoints the novel's theme of how the others have, little by little, adapted youthful ardour to meet the onset of comfort and wealth. Even Mervyn, by his espousal of such movements as women's rights, was

in the process of metamorphosing from person to personality. He had become a man who looked for his name in the *Sunday Times* birthday lists and felt himself slighted to find it omitted.

He plays a malicious part in the events which, complicated by her erratic younger children and an irascible neighbouring pensioner, distract Ali from the completion of the painting on which she had been steadily working. "When it came to the cut and thrust of articulate malice, her husband was no mean slouch", gloats Ali; in his absence, Trapido is a splendid substitute and carries along the tale with great descriptive gusto.

"There was nobody like Mrs Gaitskill for putting in sobering perspective the woes of one's own loins", observes Ali after her cleaning-lady has given a graphic description of a difficult birth. As she did in *Brother of the More Famous Jack*, Trapido also presents an array of alarming gynaecological detail: the recurring accounts of Ali's troublesome diaphragm; a metaphor revolving round an artichoke, which brings a new meaning to vegetable love; even a stray cat's "small, distended vulva was edged with blood".

As the novel reaches its close Ali looks at the canvas (now under commission by Noah's first wife) with a sudden intensity, finishes off the problematic oranges, and it is done; it is finished. Laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, she has had her vision, in which she saw the whole of her past life firmly behind her as a riotous black comedy upon which the curtain could now fall. One is left with the happy feeling that, given her offspring and associates, such a transformation will be improbable.

## Family loves

Linda Taylor

URSULA HOLDEN  
Eric's Choice  
143pp. Methuen. £7.95.  
0413 356409

Eric, Violet (Eric's wife), Ivy (Violet's mother), Chester (Ivy's husband) and Charmian (Eric's mother): the names take turns to head the chapters of Ursula Holden's new novel. The perspective shifts us each character's bit of the story, or version of someone else's bit, emerges. As in much of her fiction, Holden is interested in harmonizing a collection of misfits. On the surface, the Caive-Propps (Eric and Charmian), with their middle-class values of taste and control, have little in common with the Stubbs – vulgar, temperamental, working class. Symbolically, though, there's more in a name than class. The Caive-Propps are cave-men at heart, propped up by fancy ideas. Eric, who "saw himself as [Violet's] saviour", rapes and beats his wife; he is capable of feeling that "he might not be able to control himself. He wanted to run amok with an axe". Charmian, similarly, constantly feels her control slipping: she hits Violet round the face. And Violet, having taken on the name, hits her mother

on her mouth and across her neck. She saw that smeared lipstick and hit it. This was power, she was hurting at last. The Stubbs family never went in for violence, she'd never been bashed in her life. She was a Caive-Propp, behaving like Charmian. She was hitting and couldn't stop.

The Stubbs, although they can be stubby and blunt, have their vagaries: Ivy, away from Chester, twines unfaithfully; Violet's eye-catching prettiness is belied by her startlingly preposterous purple clothes and hair.

Eric, an apparently innocent idealist, is a teacher of English and a would-be writer of a play called *Family Loves*; with his deformed right hand (one finger, a misplaced thumb – "just like a pen" says Vee), he's a figure of shocked sympathy and a reminder of Charmian's buried guilt (she took tranquillizers while pregnant). His decision to marry his pupil Violet is romantic – "he'd seen her singing Jerusalem and become helpless". Eric takes Violet at face value, thinks he can mould his seventeen-year-old wife, with her Shadwell

junk stall background, to the niceties, the muted exquisiteness, of the house on the green, decorated by his art-collector mother. Vee is his pet, his darling; together they will build Jerusalem (lines from Blake's poem provide the epigraph for the novel). They share sexual bliss on a Spanish package honeymoon and return to discontent. Eric is horrified when the house on the green transformed by Violet into a purple "paradise" of gaudy knick-knacks and tubular steel; Violet is bemused by Eric's disdain for her improvements.

Ursula Holden is adept at exposing the muddy complexities of her characters, the lurking bestiality behind the human proprieties. In this novel, an English cat, an American skunk and a Spanish dog are markers on the line of human unpleasantness – they are both morally revealing and punitive. Violet keeps a cat, appropriately named Dick, which sleeps in her bed. Eric, intending to pet Vee, touches Dick. Dick bites Eric; Eric savages Vee; Vee and Dick come home to Shadwell. Chester, excluded by the reunited Ivy and Vee, becomes allergic to Dick – starts scratching and sneezing. Vee is forced to leave the "filthy beast" with Charmian, housekeeping for Eric while he goes to a writer's retreat in America. Dick and Charmian (tautly celibate) keep their distance. Meanwhile, Eric meets Fran, deformed in foot and eye. They go to bed. A skunk falls down the chimney of his woodland hut, gets in the sleeping bag. Eric and Fran stink of corruption. Back in London, Violet takes Ivy on a Spanish holiday (a re-run of her honeymoon). Roma Catholic Ivy, who had kept her daughter "as fresh as cream" before marriage and who has never been abroad before, flirts with and makes love to the waiter. She's bitten by a dog and dies of tetanus.

Holden's irony and humour, her economic prose, and her belief in the strengths of human frailty take the tragic edge off her revelations of dirtiness, deformity and death. With the mud disturbed and the beasts appeared, there's room in her scheme of things for the remaining four characters, plus baby, to make an oddly homogeneous group. "We know each other a bit better, after this lot, anyway," says Vee, and suggests that they appear on a television documentary called "The Secret of Family Love". It's a blackly, rather than bleakly, comic ending.

## Taking on the alien

Michael Hulse

LANDEG WHITE  
For Captain Stedman  
64pp. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets. £3.  
090399772 X  
JOHN GREENING  
Westlerner  
77pp. Surrey: Hippopotamus Press. £4.20.  
0904179273  
CARL RAKOSI  
Spiritus, I  
54pp. Durham: Pig Press. £3.20.  
090399772 X  
PAUL EVANS  
Sweet Lucy  
35pp. Durham: Pig Press. £2.90.  
0903997746  
RICHARD BURNS  
Roots/Routes  
44pp. Los Poetry Press. £4.50.  
0914964323

Some years ago Landeg White published a useful study of V. S. Naipaul, and his own writing now proves to share many of Naipaul's concerns with the personal, political and historical problems raised by the borrowed cultures (Naipaul's phrase) which colonialism has left in its wake. Trinidad, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Mozambique: these are the locations of White's poems, not in the spirit of ostentation which Kingsley Amis mocked ("I travel, you see") but in one of devotion to the task of understanding racial and national tensions.

"Province of Freedom", for example – set in Freetown, Sierra Leone – celebrates a pastoral tranquillity experienced with his "brown son" (White's wife is from Mozambique), but the poem's texture is enriched by the unease which informs the presentation:

The Botanical Gardens (former  
War Department Property Keep  
Out, former bush) are  
bush again, llanas wrapping  
gun mounts and dog-latin  
tags, a python's grip

on ironwood and the cannon  
ball tree threatening the track  
I carried Martin down

across the once-bridged brook  
and up to Heddie's ruined Farm.

The gun mounts and the botanical tags emblematically present the twin foundations of colonial rule – military power, and the defining power of European culture – while the reversion of the Botanical Gardens to bush, and the ruin of the farm and its bridge, point to the futility of attempts to impose an alien order. Here and in other poems White uses an understated and flexible variant of *terza rima* for his post-colonial observations, and the result can be a sharp terseness which reads like shorthand. James Fenton:

On the road,  
liberated Pentheus  
is murdered;  
there are new guerrillas  
filling through  
the tall grass.

White deploys his forms – *terza rima*, syllabics, stress-count lines, free verse – with a fine ear for ironic aptness: the approximate iambs of "Ministering" are wryly appropriate in an Achille-like piece describing conflict between tribal origins and ministerial splendour, while the lush texture of the opening of "After the Revolution" recalls Matthew Arnold's "A Dream" and that poem's "river of Life". For *Captain Stedman* is a sensitive, carefully-crafted collection, which besides its alert colonial commentaries offers other pleasures – West Indian speech patterns zestfully recreated, or an evocative description of flamingoes – that make highly enjoyable reading.

John Greening also looks to Africa in *Westlerner*, but his focal point throughout is Egypt, and poems of the present are never far removed from a sense of the past which is rather more mythic than White's. This is not to say that Greening avoids socio-political comment; if anything, his observations on privilege and the moneyed classes are more acerbic than White's, as in his contrast (in "Ushabti") between the willing servant and the lady of the house – there are two crates of duty-free in

the boot / bring them up for me!"), or in these lines from the Oberoi Hotel at Aswan:

dates hang  
above the swimming pool  
unharvested

The rich old Europeans  
their drugs  
and their paunches  
are fallen fruit  
past ripeness  
turning brown

In its economy, and to some extent its vocabulary, Greening's poetry in this manner can be reminiscent of the brief satiric observations in early Pound. A more meditative poet can be seen in his six poems on artefacts in Egyptian museums, the poems on Nefertiti and Cleopatra, and the long mythic poem "Lord of the West". *Westlerner* suggests that Greening could be compared to Charles Boyle, who has also written poems from contemporary Egypt: Greening lacks Boyle's clear instinct for detail and for the essentials of a dramatic situation, but he has a more highly developed sense of the suggestiveness of human history.

Ric Caddell's Pig Press has now survived the passage of ten years, quite an achievement in the world of the small presses, and two of Pig's recent publications stand out as particularly deserving of attention. Carl Rakosi is a survivor of that loose "Objectivist" group that was active in Pound's ambit in the 1920s and 30s; his name comes to mind with Zukofsky, Oppen, Williams and Reznikoff, and his strengths and weaknesses remain similar to theirs. *Spiritus, I* contains the mellowed, meditative work of advanced age, but the poems are still powered by a forceful motor, as in the opening of the first piece:

Lord, what is a man?  
He looks into a glass  
and sees a physical figure  
looking back at him,  
the two waiting immobile  
for him to reappear  
as the world knows him,  
by name, by work, by habits,  
in what particulars  
he is significant,  
and . . . why should it be embarrassing  
to speak of this?

. . . In what endearing . . .  
The two-ply line favoured by Rakosi is a wiry, resourceful form that he uses with initiative, adapting it equally effectively to affectionate description of a goat and an epigrammatic reflection called "Walkers passing each other in the park":

Had I been eighty-five  
he would have stopped  
to compare notes,  
but what was there  
to talk about  
with a man only sixty-five?

The dangers of such writing are that it can be too indulgent towards slight subject matter, and that it can result in pedestrian flatness if its rhythms are not always fully alert. Rakosi can provide examples of both failures, but he is nevertheless rewarding.

Paul Evans proves in *Sweet Lucy* to have a sense of dynamics in syntax which at times recalls Frank O'Hara, and writes much in that British bathetic manner that includes Monty Python. "I would like / the brazen muskrat flambé / with the sauce de beowulf", writes Evans in "In the Anglo-Saxon Tradition", and in "Happy Chinese New Year" he speculates whether Wordsworth ever ate curry. A poem dedicated to Hemingway is called "For whom the sleeping bag unrolls". This jokiness makes *Sweet Lucy* a lively collection though that same quality makes it tiring.

Finally, a selection of Richard Burns's poetry has been made for the American market, and comes illustrated with monotypes by Douglas Kinsey. Burns' somewhat self-consciously fits the word "entropy" into a context which makes it seem out of place: an awareness of certain trends in the 1960s in the United States seems to linger uncomfortably. At times he produces a Gothic grotesqueness which is not easy to take seriously: "tree of creation / tree of destruction / temple planted / in an upturned skull / worming woody / fibres more mythic than White's. This is not to say that Greening avoids socio-political comment; if anything, his observations on privilege and the moneyed classes are more acerbic than White's, as in his contrast (in "Ushabti") between the willing servant and the lady of the house – there are two crates of duty-free in

## The pain and the portmanteaux

George Craig

CHRISTINE BROOK-ROSE  
Amalgamemnon  
144pp. Manchester Carcanet. £7.95.  
0856359

A distinction is made (perhaps still is) made between a compound, where diverse elements fused, and a mixture, in which they were merely added together. This novel is unquestionably a mixture, and rather an odd one, for it lays high verbal sophistication (an almost uninterrupted display of it) alongside a persistent concern with humiliation, loss and man's inhumanity to woman.

The "I" of the novel, a woman no longer young, deprived by "cuts" of her job as teacher of literature/philosophy/history, speaks her response to this and to the world in which she

must now move: the world of economic realism, power politics and the computer. It is likely that she has also lost her husband or lover and is learning to move too in the uncontrollable world of others' desires. The "suave and portly man at the National Education Computer" will explain her profound redundancy, hint at new possibilities but make clear that the price is a share of her bed. His approaches are presented with fastidious and allusive distaste and capped with "If he were someone in a nineteenth-century novel I might ironically detach him".

But this confident handling is verbal only. Her capacity to mock merely sharpens her awareness of how ineffective it is within her world: there will always be suave and portly men (and "portly" carries more than a hint of euphemism), and they will always get their way. Nor is there rescue in fantasy. In one recurrent sequence she is drawn to Orion; but

he will put or let her down no less surely than the latest Willy or Wally. The sequences multiply and expand, set off by things remembered, read or heard; but in almost all, the playful and the prodigiously inventive alike, a clever and sensitive woman will be exploited and undervalued. Ideologically and personally she is a loser.

The contrast between linguistic vitality and existential defeat could easily become the matter of rancorous demonstration ("Look what the world has done to me in spite of my gifts") or elitist demolition ("See how incapable these peasants are of understanding me"). The blurb-writer, dutifully focusing on Christine Brook-Rose's word-play, simply dismisses the contrast: the "verve and gaiety of her experimentation", her "infectious joy in language" ensure that "the narrator's personal crisis disappears". It is the narrator herself who makes sure that nothing of the kind happens; that we are given an immediate awareness both of the central preoccupation and of tone.

There are indeed moments of anger and contempt, there is an abundance of experimentation, but they never hide the continually reiterated sense of loss, fear and bewilderment: now rueful, now bitter, now resigned. The verbal inventiveness, the easy familiarity with European literary culture are a defence against hopelessness, pain and the intrusive other. Even the best of the sequences (that, for instance, in which she picks bare a just-invented genealogical tree and puts the characters to work in a fairy-story) do no more than bring a moment's ease, hardly different in this from the radio to which she turns for solace in the small hours. Both will soon let her back in the reminder of her plight.

But the plight is not just what a hostile or indifferent world has imposed; more destruct-

ive still are the narrator's malleability and the ease of nerve. If she can mimic her overbearing, she can also mimic her own capitulation, the ease and speed with which she colludes with them. After one put-down she exclaims: "I would seem to be unpopular with these characters. How long shall I continue to rush into over-friendliness obscurely to make up for the overfreeness of my solitude?" This sort of talk is not cancelled out by some such answer as "Let sex equal why." What is clear is the difficulty of reconciling, in a single fiction, smart word-play with the equivalent of the old theatrical aside. What we have in the end is a poignant tale of vulnerability and timid hope checked out with puns and portmanteaux, names and knowingness. In a word, a mixture.

Sarah McCoy's first collection of what may be called "prose pieces" (*Album*, 156pp., John Calder, Paperback, £3.50) privileges looking. The individual and idiosyncratic gaze is confirmed by the exotic, tropical topography the prose evokes, and by the extreme allusiveness and fragmentation of that prose. A highly charged succession of images – gushings, gaspings, screechings, dazlings – repeatedly attest to heightened experience; and a child-hood is consistently intimated, one lived in opposition to straight-laced adulthood. It can seem as if the imagination has all been done for (or at) us, as if we are witnesses to, rather than partakers in, intensity. As the prose illustrates, it parades its strangeness, as its alliteration aggressively intrudes, it is the reader who only start to feel like the breathless victim in a hothouse of over-ripe language. A vision which is "poetic" threatens to yield to one which is private – guardedly and even hostily so. The line between privacy shielded and privacy cited is a fine but crucial one.

## TLS Subscriptions

The *TLS* is read in over eighty countries throughout the world. A large proportion of our readers find that the surest and most convenient way to get the *TLS* each week is to take out a subscription. Our subscription service provides readers quickly and regularly with their weekly copy of the paper, which offers an incomparable and up to date guide to books published all over the world. Simply complete the coupon below and sent it together with your cheque to the address shown.

	6 months	12 months
UK	26 issues	52 issues
Europe	£17.50	£35.00
USA & Canada (Air Freight)	\$27.00	\$54.00
Rest of the world: Surface Mail	US\$35.00	US\$70.00
Rest of the world: Air Mail	\$25.00	\$50.00
	£33.50	£67.00

Please send me *The Times Literary Supplement*

☐ 6 months ☐ 12 months

NAME

PLEASE PRINT

ADDRESS

I enclose my cheque for \_\_\_\_\_ made payable to Times Newspapers Ltd.

Signature

Date

Return this coupon to Times Newspapers Ltd.  
Supplements Subscription Manager, Oakfield House,  
35 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath,  
West Sussex RM16 3DH.

TLS



# Poems guinea-each

## Grevel Lindop

KENNETH CURRY  
The Contributions of Robert Southey to the  
Morning Post  
224pp. University of Alabama Press. \$19.75.  
08173 03199

In 1798 Robert Southey, twenty-three years old and moderately known as a travel-writer and the radical poet of *Joan of Arc*, contracted to supply the *Morning Post* with one or two poems a week in exchange for a weekly retainer of one guinea. Southey, who once boasted of his ability to compose a poem on the dentist's instruments whilst having a tooth extracted, was not one to balk at the idea of writing to order, and he dutifully contributed, anonymously or pseudonymously, some 260 original poems and translations before his connection with the *Post* ended in 1803.

About one-third of the poems (including such crude but solidly memorable pieces as the "The Incheape Rock" and "After Blenheim") were republished in the 1837-8 *Poetical Works*. The rest were forgotten. Kenneth Curry has brought together those recently identified (notably by Geoffrey Carnall and Mary Jacobus) and added many more, chiefly by reference to Southey's *Commonplace Book* and the manuscripts at Keswick, so that we now have as complete a collection of Southey's *Morning Post* poetry as anyone is likely to want.

Certainly, it is pretty sorry stuff. Curry himself confesses to having no illusions about the quality of the work, and its interest is mainly historical, giving a sample of the competent but forgettable "magazine-verse" of the period,

and showing the powerful impact of Wordsworth and Coleridge upon that placid and self-congratulatory surface.

Southey's stock-in-trade consisted chiefly of radical-patriotic "Epitaphs" and "Inscriptions" ("For a Column in Smithfield Where Wat Tyler Was Killed"; "For Cardiff Castle, Where Robert of Normandy Was Confin'd by His Brother Henry the First"); praises of Retirement; jollification over pigeon pie, eggs and bacon or "The Wig of a Scarecrow"; and translations from Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. Translations and imitations account for more than sixty of the poems and the results, though fluent, are excessively dull. One would like to know how faithful or free the versions are, but Curry's notes do not comment, nor, for the most part, do they identify the original poems; it is frustrating to be left merely with Southey's word that a poem is "From the Italian of Father Bettinelli" or "Imitated from Pellicer de Velasco".

It is fascinating, then, to notice the sudden eruptions of derivative vividness when the poems (particularly in the summer and autumn of 1798) take a Wordsworthian or Coleridgean turn. Southey probably saw the *Lyrical Ballads* in manuscript several months before their publication in September 1798, and though he was to review them fiercely when they appeared, in the meantime he was not above borrowing both subjects and style. "The Idiot" and "The Mad Woman" are clear vulgarizations of "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn"; "The Murderer", in which a killer is driven mad by the posthumous stare of his victim, derives unmistakably from the "The Ancient Mariner".

His teeth were clench'd, his lips did grin,  
His glaz'd eyes staring wide;

And his distorted cheek was fix'd,

Convuls'd as when he died.

There is also, more surprisingly, an imitation of Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight". Southey's "Night" begins:

How calm, how quiet all! still, or at times  
Just interrupted by such stirring sounds  
As harmonise with stillness; even the bark  
Of yonder watch-dog, heard at intervals,  
Comes from the distance pleasantly. Where now  
The lovely landscape! hill and vale and wood . . .

Although Curry's useful bibliography sends us to the places where at least some of these connections are examined, his own introduction and notes avoid any detailed comment, which is disappointing because such influence (or plagiarism) is the most interesting and perplexing aspect of Southey's *Morning Post* poems. Symptomatic of the puzzles that lurk here is "The Emblem", which offers an image for matrimony:

See Clara! as these tapers meet,  
How soon their flames unite,  
And both expanding as they blend  
Emit a stronger light . . .

Curry attributes this to Southey on the plausible grounds that he was interested in emblems, and addressed another poem to "Clara". But he fails to mention that the poem matches closely a well-known jottings in Coleridge's "Gulch Notebook", made in 1795 and derived from Priestley's *Opticks*: "The flames of two Candles joined give a much stronger Light than both of them separate . . . Picture of Hymen". Did Southey pick up the image from Coleridge's conversation? Or is the poem really by Coleridge? A greater willingness to explore such questions might have made this merely useful book into an important and fascinating one.

## Into unreason

### Rosemary Ashton

GEOFFREY THURLEY  
The Romantic Predicament  
215pp. Macmillan. £20.  
0333 347072  
TODIN SIEBERS  
The Romantic Fantastic  
194pp. Cornell University Press. £16.50.  
08014 4674 X

The familiar critical problem of defining Romanticism and naming authors whose work may be said to be "Romantic", seems no nearer to solution, though much of interest has been written in the attempt. One need not be too surprised, then, to find that the two books reviewed here, despite the apparent similarity of their titles, have hardly anything in common. *The Romantic Predicament* opens with a chapter entitled "Defining Romanticism", contains several chapters in which the author cautiously and intelligently attempts to do so, then finally settles, uncontroversially, in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and Byron as the main standard bearers of the movement, though many more writers, English and European, are brought into the picture for analogy's sake. In *The Romantic Fantastic* Tobin Siebers unashamedly, and without confronting any definitions of Romanticism at all, contemplates under the term "the Romantics" some nineteenth-century writers (Baudelaire, Hoffmann, Gogol, Poe, and Hawthorne) who were preoccupied by fantasy and superstition. There is not a single mention of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, or Byron.

Both enterprises are valid. While Siebers begins with a topic – the fantastic – which is undeniably a feature of much European and American literature of the nineteenth century, Geoffrey Thurley's endeavour is to identify and study a particular "predicament", namely the "crisis of consciousness dramatised by Wordsworth, and Coleridge" in their epic poem "Immortality" and "Dejection Odes". Thurley writes in a gently speculative way, ranging widely in his attempt to show how "the Romantic predicament is ours also", in defiance of those modern theorists of culture who despise Romantic self-consciousness and seek only to study a depersonalized text. He identifies a change in man's outlook greater than any previous one and, he implies, greater than any we may now try to foster between ourselves and the Romantics. This change was the final erosion of certainties wrought by eighteenth-century empirical philosophy:

On the one hand, scientists and politicians trumpet the coming of light and certainty after centuries of darkness; on the other, are heard cries of despair at the traditional certainties are eroded by empirical scepticism. The more we know, the less certain we feel: that is our gloomy discovery.

To locate Romantic literature in a context of eighteenth-century philosophical advances is, of course, to do nothing new. Nevertheless, Thurley's approach is fresh and suggestive, if occasionally puzzling. Much the best part of the book is the section "Meaning and Meaningfulness", in which he gives the clearest and least inaccurate résumé of Kant's contribution to the disappearance of certainty (and God!) have yet seen in a work of literary criticism. This is followed by an interesting suggestion that the quest poems of Keats and Shelley highlight the Romantic predicament in their conflict between form (quest) and content (the hero searches for and/or finds nothing). There is, though, least fresh and convincing when he confronts the two poems he finds central to his thesis. His analysis of the "Immortality" and "Dejection" odes is ordinary in the main, and the *Dejection* ode is ordinary in the main, and the *Dejection* ode is ordinary in the main.

Goldberg's work at too low and literal a level to be greatly illuminating. The study, in consequence, is a little broken-backed: the Diderot material fails to cast significant new light on the book's more challenging claims about Richardson. Goldberg sits rather loose to feminist criticism, and confronts recent post-structuralist readings of Richardson with a blend of scepticism, open-mindedness and honest bemusement. An outrageously sexist excerpt from William Beatty Warner's *Reading Clarissa*, typical enough of his book as a whole, is shamelessly described as "defensive". One hopes that this is a misprint for "offensive".

comes a little late: among the majority of the upper middle class, Goldberg argues, its image of practical and moral excellence is already archaic.

Intervened with this historical thesis is a somewhat less successful attempt to read Richardson's novel as the mighty dramatization of a sexual myth. Quite what is new or controversial about this claim is not obvious; Richardson critic from Leslie Fiedler onwards have duly noted the mythological archetypes (Loveless as Satan, Clarissa as Christ figure) which the text locks in lethal combat. To stress, as Goldberg does, that *Clarissa* is a religious novel can only be a covert dig at social-realist readings of the kind proposed by Ian Watt. But Goldberg never declares her hand here, well-manneredly reluctant as she is to engage in either theorizing or polemicalizing. In any case, the fascination of Richardson surely lies neither in "myth" nor "realism" but in the curious interrelation of the two – in the ways in which the novels are at once history and allegory, myopically detailed and mythologically capacious.

The section of the book on Diderot contains

## On ethnography bent

### Emma Lathley

MARY ELLEN BROWN  
Burns and Tradition  
176pp. Macmillan. £25.  
0333 364252

In 1786, following the warm reception of the Kilmarnock Edition, Burns went to Edinburgh to arrange for the publication of a second edition of his poems. Hitherto his debt to local oral tradition had been, Mary Ellen Brown argues, largely unconscious and intuitive. His experience in the capital prompted his awareness of the threat posed to the survival of Scottish song by Anglicization and caused him to direct his main efforts to its preservation, efforts to its preservation.

*Burns and Tradition* aims to place the poet not in a literary but in an oral tradition, to document the range of Burns's relationship with Scots culture. It offers illuminating comments on his "ethnographic bent" in poems such as "Halloween" and "The Cotter's Saturday Night" before moving on to a discussion of the work of the Scots Musical Museum. Brown analyses the connections between nationalist and antiquarian impulses and provides a most useful commentary on ways in which conventional methods of attribution (in particular, a reliance on holograph matter as evidence of authorship) are misleading with Burns's oeuvre. Her treatment of the traditional, anecdotal material in "Tam O'Shanter" is especially acute, indicating not only the obviously folkloric surface content but also the way the poem re-creates the context of legend-telling.

The second half of the book is concerned with tradition's reciprocal use of Burns; with the poems, songs and phrases that have become part of our spoken repertoire, acquiring a status akin to proverbs; with aspects of the Burns legend and cult; and with the twentieth-century market-place for Burns artefacts. Brown's points on changes in the nature of the Burns myth are perceptive as she shows how the forms that the response took shifted from stories deriving from personal experience in

## Pious heroines

### Terry Eagleton

RITA GOLDBERG  
Sex and Enlightenment: Women in Richardson and Diderot  
239pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.  
0521 260698

Rita Goldberg's chief contribution to the gathering interest in eighteenth-century femininity lies in a close examination of the relations between *Clarissa* and the Puritan conduct books. That Richardson's pious heroine models her life on the kind of spiritual exercises proposed by the conduct books is plain enough; what is more interesting is Dr Goldberg's claim that, somewhere in the eighteenth century, this spiritual model, previously thought applicable to both sexes, becomes increasingly concentrated on women. Virtue is, so to speak, sexualized; women become the preservers of traditional moral values, guardians of the religious code, in a society where their political and economic power is contracting. *Clarissa* is a key moment in this complex process, which like many a moral exhortation

## Paperbacks

### Biography and memoirs

JAMES POPE-HENNESSY AND STUART PRESTON, are more muted in its successors, where a lightness of touch and gracefulness of manner take over to provide the witty and elegant text, sometimes scandalous and always informative, of one of the most enjoyable of English diaries of its period. These are books likely to be dipped into repeatedly, so often that one wonders whether a laminated matt white binding is entirely suitable for the reprint.

T.G.D.F.

### Humour

OSBERT LANCASTER. *The Littlehampton Saga*. 253pp. Methuen. £3.95. 0 413 54990 9. *The Littlehampton Saga* brings together Sir Osbert's three studies in the history, topography, and iconography of Draynefele and its principal family, now earls of Littlehampton, published over a quarter of a century as *The Saracen's Head* (1948, reviewed in the *TLS* of December 18), *Draynefele Revealed* (1949, reviewed in the *TLS* of November 11), and *The Littlehampton Bequest* (1973, reviewed in the *TLS* of December 28). Reduced in size and lacking the colour plates of the Crusader volume (now a fuzzy grey), most of the line drawings still show up excellently and are a delightful complement to the text. The historiography is satisfyingly traditional. Crusades are narrated at a spanking pace; Draynefele is revealed in topographical detail untroubled by any debate on the rise and fall of the gentry (though normative mendacity appropriate to a *Past and Present* article recurs in the drawings); and it is the scholarship of a Betjeman rather than of a Pevsner that informs the architectural commentary. Eye and hand are fully in harmony, both for the architectural criticism and particularly for the long series of family portraits ranging from the Master of the Foolish Virgins to the David Hockney portrait.

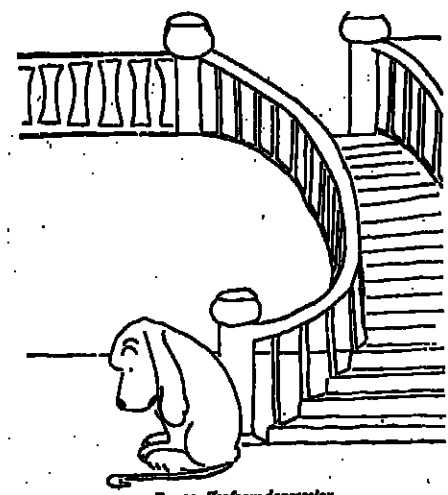
A.S.B.

*The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1857-1880*. Selected, edited and translated by Francis Steegmuller. 327pp. Faber and Faber. £6.95. 0 571 13313 4. *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert* was first published in 1983 and reviewed in the *TLS* of April 29 that year. Flaubert's letters are magnificent: commanding direct, ironically humorous, effortlessly scholarly, rumbunctiously obscene. They repelled Henry James; and Proust, who should have known better, thought their style "even worse" than the style of Flaubert's novels. Gide did know better – "for more than five years [Flaubert's] correspondence took the place of the Bible at my bedside. It was my reservoir of energy." He was not put off by a man who experienced the beginnings of a book like a tumescence: "Finally I'm beginning to have an erection. That's the important thing. But how hard it's been to get it up! Will it stay?" Francis Steegmuller's second volume of Flaubert's letters is, like the first, masterfully edited and introduced, and covers the period from 1857 to his death in 1880 – the period in which he wrote *Salammbô*, *L'Education Sentimentale*, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, and *Trois Contes*, clinging throughout "to the chimera of style, which consumes me body and soul".

G. S.

JAMES LEES-MILNE. *Another Self*. 157pp. Faber. £2.95. 0 571 13324 X; *Ancestral Voices*. 302pp. Faber. £3.95. 0 571 13325 8; *Prophecy and Peace*. 254pp. Faber. £3.95. 0 571 13326 6; *Caves of Ice*. 276pp. Faber. £3.95. 0 571 13327 4. *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert* brings together the one volume of Mr Lees-Milne's autobiography with three volumes of his diary for the years 1942-7, all reviewed in the *TLS* (April 6, 1970, October 10, 1975, October 7, 1977 and March 4, 1983 respectively). It is good to have *Another Self* brought into the diary sequence, to which it is an essential prelude both in mood and attitude. It includes the story of his revision from a destructive undergraduate rampage at Rousham Park, an incident which converted him instantly to the defence of English architecture, a cause to which he was available to devote himself full-time when invalided out of the Guards early in the War, becoming the National Trust's historic buildings adviser. This book provides a framework for the diary, in which the social life of wartime London is so well evoked, but only in the intervals of architectural preservation work for the Trust.

The well-observed personalities of Mr Lees-Milne's autobiography – Sir Herbert Warren of Magdalen College, Oxford, for example, or his early employers Lord Lloyd and Sir Roderick Jones – prepare us for a long series of skilful vignettes in the diaries, drawn from amongst the gentry and nobility with whom his professional negotiations were conducted. The diarist's pre-occupation with architecture or in class distinctions ("may they endure for ever") are pointed out, and become almost endearing rather than annoying. The eagerness of the first volume of diary, involving men friends such as



Dogs suffer from depression.

From Thurber's *Dogs* by James Thurber (254pp. Dent. £2.95. 0 460 02286 5). First published in 1955 and reviewed in the *TLS* of December 23 that year.

### Nature

ROBERT MAY. *The Times Nature Diary*. Illustrated by Richard Blake. 125pp. Robson Books. £2.95. 0 86051 266 5. *The Times Nature Diary* is so well loved by many readers of *The Times* that it has become a tradition for the diary to be published in the *Times* Information Service, to the Nature notes by D.J.M. to be found there regularly every Monday. Fifty-two of these have now been collected (first published in hardback last year), slightly adapted so that they describe an "average" year, week by week. There is usually a paragraph on birds and another on trees, flowers and other creatures. Unlike many collections, this is more than the sum of its parts. Opening it at random, the first week of May, for example, is suddenly and vividly evoked in the middle of autumn. Looking ahead to a week in winter, the reader may feel that it is not so much to be dreaded; in presenting a telescoped version of the passage of the seasons, has the same calming effect, more rapidly achieved, as the regular succession of the seasons themselves. The illustrations are entirely appropriate and the book also has an index.

M.F.

### Philosophy

A. J. AYER. *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. 280pp. George Allen and Unwin. £3.95. 0 04 100044 7. *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* was first published in 1982 and reviewed in the *TLS* of March 11, 1983. The reviewer wrote: "Unsurprisingly . . . this book has features which put it at odds with some now prevailing fashions – not least the author's characteristic elegance of style, economy of expression and breadth of philosophical interest. C. I. Lewis, Collingwood and Broad, for example, receive a more detailed and sympathetic treatment than any *aficionado* of the current scene might expect – and, indeed, in the case of Collingwood at least, than one familiar with Ayer's own conception of philosophy might expect. In most cases this studied neglect of the vogue yields substantial dividends: I doubt for example that I shall be the only one moved to read C. I. Lewis more carefully thanks to Ayer's consideration of his work."

### Photography

ROLAND BARTHES. *Camera Lucida*. 119pp. Fontana. £2.50. 0 00 654061 9. *Camera Lucida* is his last book, Roland Barthes sets out to discover by what essential feature photography is to be distinguished from "the community of images", and as his starting point, he takes the attraction he feels for some photographs – "For of this attraction, at least, I was certain." Unsystematic, subjective, sometimes extravagant, Barthes's investigations include the careful dissection of our peculiar interest in photographs, speculation on the difference between photography and painting (the former is what he calls "an uncertain art", in which the notion of the artist's style is inoperative), and photography and cinema, which has a quite distinct phenomenology. Part Two consists of even more personal and mournful reflections on death and time summoned up by a photograph of his mother as a child. The French original, *La chambre claire: Note sur la photographie*, was published in 1980 (reviewed in the *TLS* of November 14) and is here translated by Richard Howard. Also available is Barthes's *Image, Music, Text* (220pp. Fontana. £2.95. 0 00 654067 8) a collection of essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, and reviewed in the *TLS*, October 9, 1977.

A.P.

### Science

GARY ZUKAV. *The Dancing Wu Li Masters. An Overview of the New Physics*. 352pp. Flamingo. £2.95. 0 00 654030 9. *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* was first published in 1980 and reviewed in the *TLS* of February 15 that year. The reviewer wrote: "This book is an extremely clear and easily understandable account of the latest developments in physics, which can be read with equal profit by those who have little or no mathematical or technical knowledge and by those who specialize in the study of physics and its research. It does not attempt to teach by leading the reader through a mass of facts and detailed calculations. Rather, Gary Zukav explains in the first chapter, he finds his inspiration in the ancient Chinese tradition of a Master 'who begins at the centre, at the heart of the matter' and who communicates the essence. The book is thus concerned with imagination and intuition, rather than with the accumulation of dead knowledge."

### Travel

FRÉYA STARK. *Alexander's Path, from Caria to Cilicia*. 283pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0480 4. *Alexander's Path* is the seventh book by Dame Freya Stark to be republished in the well-produced Century Travellers series, and the third (but independent) volume in a sequence dealing with her travels on the west and south coasts of Turkey. It was first published in 1958 and welcomed by the *TLS* reviewer (October 24) who pointed particularly to the author's capacity for viewing past and present "stereoscopically", a conjunction that her choice of Alexander's route (though in the opposite direction) makes all the more apparent. The volume is more than a mere contribution to travel literature; it makes its contribution to scholarship as well, as an article from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, reprinted in an appendix, makes clear.

G.N.

## INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Achebe, Chinua. *The Trouble with Nigeria* 1150  
Andrew, Christopher, and David Dilks (Editors). *The Missing Dimension: Governments and intelligence communities in the twentieth century* 1162  
Berryman, Philip. *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American revolutions* 1151  
Brooke-Rose, Christine. *Amalgammoon* 1168  
Brown, Mary Ellen. *Burns and Tradition* 1170  
Burns, Richard. *Roots/Routes* 1169  
Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Infante's Inferno* 1166  
Constantine, David. *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* 1148  
Curry, Kenneth. *The Contributions of Robert Southey to the 'Morning Post'* 1170  
Dobson, Christopher, and Ronald Payne. *The Dictionary of Espionage* 1162  
Drower, G. M. F. *Neil Kinnock: The path to leadership* 1165  
Evans, Paul. *Sweet Lucy* 1169  
Farkas, Andrew (Editor). *Tita Ruffo: An anthology* 1157  
Federspiel, J. F. *The Ballad of Typhoid Mary* 1153  
Goldberg, Rita. *Sex and Enlightenment: Women in Richardson and Diderot* 1170  
Greening, John. *Westminster* 1169  
Greenleaf, M. W. (Editor). *A History of the County of Stafford: Volume XX* 1152  
Gullbaud, Serge. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract expressionism, freedom and the Cold War* 1155  
Hale, John. *The Whistle Blower* 1167  
Harris, Robert. *The Making of Neil Kinnock* 1165  
Hinsley, F. H., E. E. Thomas, C. F. G. Ransom and R. C. Knight. *Intelligence in the Second World War: Volume 3, Part 1* 1163  
Holden, Ursula. *Eric's Choice* 1168  
Jacobson, Howard. *Peeping Tom* 1167  
Jorion, Paul. *Les Pêcheurs d'Houat: Anthropologie économique* 1154  
Leigh, David. *High Time: The shocking life and times of Howard Marks* 1153  
Macbeth, George. *The Lion of Pescara* 1166  
Medhurst, Kenneth N. *The Church and Labour in Colombia* 1151  
Messenger, Charles. *'Bomber' Harris and the Strategic Bombing Offensive, 1939-1945* 1164  
Mezel, Andras. *Magyar Kocka* 1154  
Parry, Beulah. *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological boundaries and visionary frontiers* 1149  
Peel, J. D. Y. *Jeshas and Nigerians: The incorporation of a Yoruba kingdom 1890-1970s* 1150  
Price, Curtis A. *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* 1157  
Priest, Christopher. *The Glamour* 1167  
Rakosi, Carl. *Spiritus* 1 1169  
Seitz, William C. *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America* 1155  
Sharpe, Tom. *Wilt on High* 1166  
Siebers, Tobin. *The Romantic Fantastic* 1170  
Syme, Ronald. *Roman Papers III. Historia Augusta Papers* 1147  
Taylor, Andrew. *The Politics of the Yorkshire Miners* 1165  
Thurley, Geoffrey. *The Romantic Predicament* 1170  
Trapido, Barbara. *Noah's Ark* 1168  
Watts, Cedric. *The Deceptive Text: An Introduction to covert plots* 1149  
White, Landeg. *For Captain Stedman* 1169  
Youngs, Joyce. *Sixteenth-Century England* 1152

In "Among this week's contributors" to last week's *TLS* it was erroneously stated that *Exile in Great Britain* was the work of John Willitt; he in fact contributed the chapter "The Emigration and the Arts" to the book, which was edited by Gerhard Hirschfeld.

The British Archaeological Awards have this week launched the Richard Colt Hoare Award for an "Archaeological Book of the Year". The 1984 finalists are *Stonehenge Complete* by Christopher Chippindale, *The Thefford Treasure* by Catherine Johns and Timothy Potter, *Village and Farmstead* by Christopher Taylor, *The Earliest Wheeled Transport* by Stuart Pigott and *Roman Britain from the Air* by S. S. Frede and J. K. S. St. Joseph. The winner will be announced on November 15.

The Arts Council announces that it has now discontinued its Books in Progress register, and is no longer accepting entries or answering queries relating to the register.